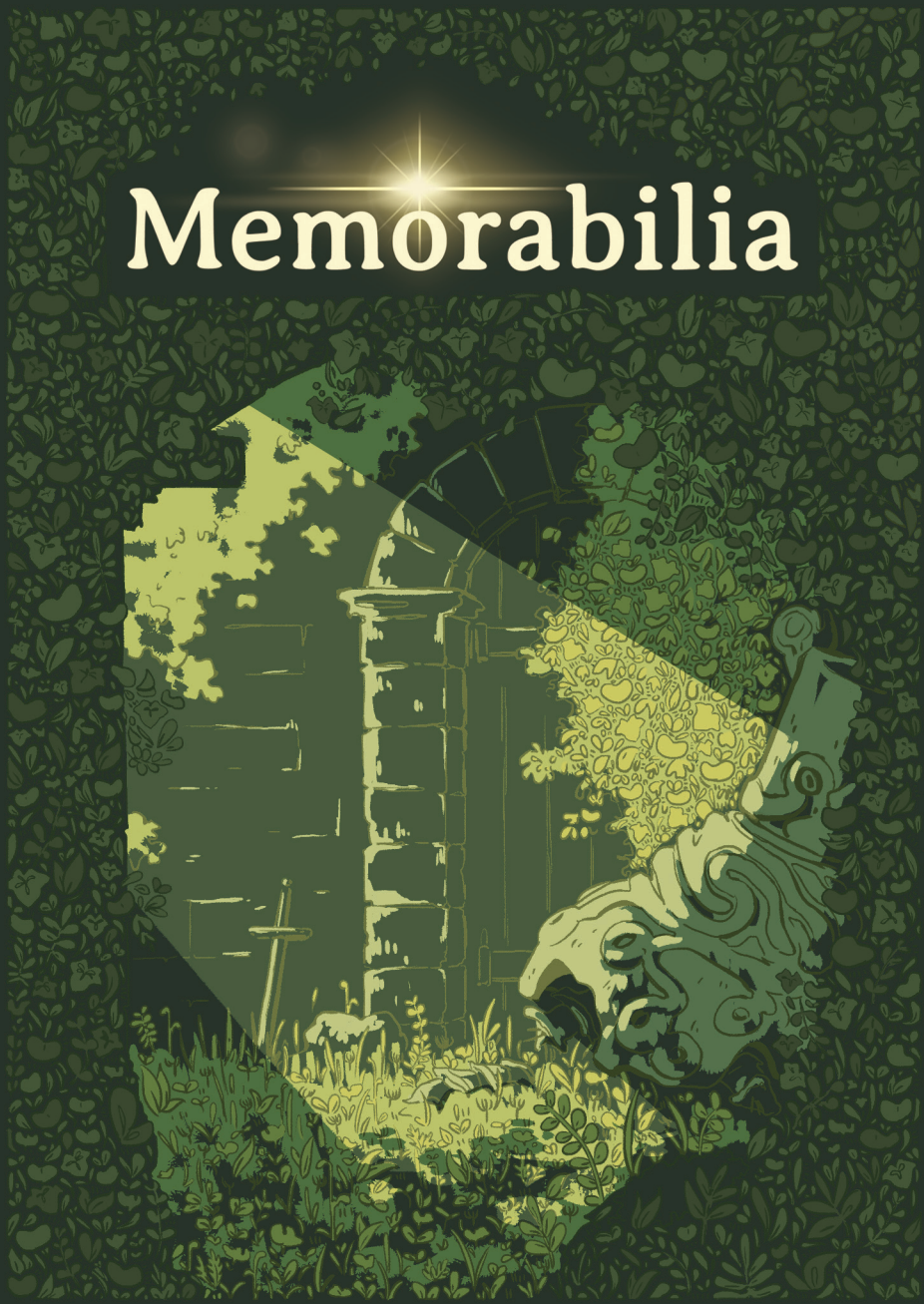
Memorabilia



archaeology of Hyrule
an unofficial Breath of the Wild fanbook

Introduction

Memorabilia: archaeology of Hyrule is a collaborative project, paying tribute to *The Legend of Zelda: Breath of the Wild*, and exploring its breathtaking, sublime world.

Acknowledgements

This zine is the product of the passionate work and boundless creativity of 28 writers and artists, who dedicated their time and love to bring it to life. This entire adventure would not have been possible without them, their input, their imagination, their talent and their trust. So, to all our amazing contributors: thank you.

Thank you to Meta, for believing in this project in the first place and offering their support, time and expertise to make this colossal adventure much less intimidating. And ultimately, much better.

Thank you to everyone who applied to, purchased, or supported this project in any way. Thank you for your enthusiasm, for the lovely notes left here and there, for your trust and generosity, and for simply making this possible.

For the millionth time, and from the bottom of our heart: thank you!

*Disclaimer: **Memorabilia** is a fan publication. It is in no way affiliated with* Nintendo *or any copyright owner of* The Legend of Zelda: Breath of the Wild. *Images and writings presented in this zine are copyright to their respectful owners.*

Table of contents

Introduction 03

Those who Live(d) 07

Fort Hateno catalogue #210 08
words by Ophelia

Letters from Mabe to Tabantha 17
words by Natalie Claire

Plateau's Hiraeth 22
words by Guppy

39 **Those who Pray(ed)**

42 Memories of a Priestess
words by Maria Helena

56 Record of the Hyrulean Royal Society for Archaeology's Forgotten Temple Expedition
words by WillfulAbyss

73 **Those who Raise(d)**

75 Zonai culture: an archaeological study
words by Fen

83 A Noble Pursuit
words by Kathryn

93 Cause of Destruction
words by Kip

115 **Contributors**

ISBN 978-0-19-569435-1

ISBN 978-0-19-569436-8 (pbk)

First published 1992

Reprinted 1993

Reprinted 1994

Those who Live(d)

piece ID:
category:

Fort Hateno Catalogue #210

words by Ophelia

[Catalogue ID #210: A mildewed leather satchel of letters, found in a chest (ID #204) in room 1E of Fort Hateno. Details the flooding of Deya Village and the migration of the villagers to Hateno. Author: [unidentified]. Addressee: [unidentified]. Transcription is as follows:]

[ID #210a]

If you're reading this, then you will surely have seen the flooding. I have never seen anything like it. The river came all the way into the lake sometime during the night and we all woke up this morning to a clear foot of water in our houses. I've gathered what I can and gone to stay with Agnes on the far side of the village. Her son's around the age of our youngest, I hope the kids will entertain each other while we figure out what to do.

[ID #210b]

I waited for you to return, but after another day the water rose to the edge of the village. I hate to think what's become of our home. Agnes and I took the children and left for higher ground. We climbed the ridge (doesn't feel like much of a ridge now, so close to the water's edge) to the mayor's house on the lake's south shore. He has family on the other side of the Peaks that he's hoping to stay with until the waters recede.

Half the town is with us, I do not know where the rest are.

Those who had more time to prepare are carrying all of their possessions with them. I wish I had brought more with me. I tried to be practical, to take only food and clothing for the children, but I did bring that lace shawl that you made for me. You know it weighs hardly anything, but when I wear it I feel as though your arms are around me, and it keeps me strong. The girls took with them only a few toys. I should have had them carry supplies as well.

There are a dozen or so travelers from Central Hyrule, who are headed east and strongly advised us to do the same. Their fear is contagious. They will not tell us what happened to their homes, but I cannot risk it coming here.

There is a great deal of smoke on the wind, it covers the stars at night and turns the sun bloody. I have a bad feeling about this. We will go east.

[ID #210c. Note: Orin the farrier has been ID'd as a former employee at the Riverside Stable. His post-calamity whereabouts are unknown]

One of the newcomers is a farrier, named Orin. I asked if he knows your brother but he does not, said he's never done work in Castle Town. I suppose farriers aren't a part of the merchant alliance, but I had to ask.

We can see a bit of Hyrule Castle from the mayor's house, but Castle Town is obscured. What on earth is that red smoke? I want to take the girls as far from there as possible, I don't care how long the journey is. Our new companions are in agreement, though they still dare not speak to what they saw before joining us, and their distress is so great that we do not press them.

I can only pray that you and your brother are far from the town, and that I will see you soon.

[ID #210d]

It's been another two days and the lake continues to swell. We cannot stay here. We must attempt to ford the river and pass under the Dueling Peaks. With how quickly the water is moving, I do not know if it is possible, if our boats can go against the current. I will tell you what I have confessed to no one else: I do not like our chances.

Where is this water coming from? When I look to the north I see only a wall of rain, but the sky is cloudless. What sort of curse is this?

***

[ID #210e. Note: Due to water damage, only one paragraph is legible]

It seems half a miracle, but we made it across the Squabble. Perhaps I was too hasty to despair. Though it feels as if the world is falling apart, the girls and I are safe. If we could do the impossible, so can you, you can find us. You've always been bolder than me. I'm trying to channel your courage, and after today I feel just a glint of it.

[ID #210f]

On the other side of the Peaks, three new families joined us from Goponga. They say that it isn't safe there either, that they too were overcome by flooding. They passed through Kakariko to get here, and much of our party is splitting to take refuge there. I will not, I want to get as far from this cursed rain as possible, and after crossing the river I do not wish a repeat experience on Lake Siela.

At this rate, we might be following this road all the way to Hateno. It is no more than a few days' walk all the way to the coast, I know, but we have slowed to a snail's pace to get around the river. I do not mind traveling so slowly, it gives more time for you to catch up.

Why have you not reached us yet? What horrors befell you? Every night that we're apart, I beg the Goddess to deliver you to me safely. I'm so tired of praying.

[ID #210g]

Remember when you were a child, and your parents would comfort you when you were frightened or unsure, and you were certain that grown-ups knew everything? They had all the answers, they always planned two steps ahead, they weren't afraid of anything?

Remember when our girls were born and we held them nice and safe in our arms and swore that we would keep them there forever, that we would always protect them? They're looking to me, for me to know what to do and where to go. I'm all that's left of their world.

I wish there was a grown-up here. I'm afraid.

[ID #210h. Note: Some words are partially obscured by mildew and were filled in by the research team]

We have been fortunate that the road past the Ash Swamp is on high ground, for the swamp is flooded [as well. The field] is littered with statues, domes with metal legs, each as tall as a man. [Children] are dying to explore them, and I admit I am curious as well, but our new friends from Central Hyrule insist that we do not approach.

Finally, a clue about what happened to them, but we're left with more questions than ever that we dare not ask.

It's been a quiet day. We passed more and more [of those statues], and there seems to be a point they are converged upon. Old Man Tam ducked out of the group to investigate, to see if there was anyone there, but there was only a patch of charred grass. He swore that one of the statues moved, that it looked at him. This place feels cursed enough that I believe it.

We will shelter at Fort Hateno for the night. It will do us good to have the protection of the garrison.

[ID #210i. Note: Upon analysis, this letter is in the same hand as the others in ID #210, though written in great haste.]

There was a battle here. There's so much blood, every breath reeks of copper. Was it the statues that did this? What chance do we have against them?

I know that none of these bodies can be yours, that you're far, far away from here, but I see your face on each one. The fort offers shelter but I cannot stay here, not for another minute. It's too horrible. Some have volunteered to stay a day or two more, to search for survivors. I am leaving my letters with them, that you might catch up to us.

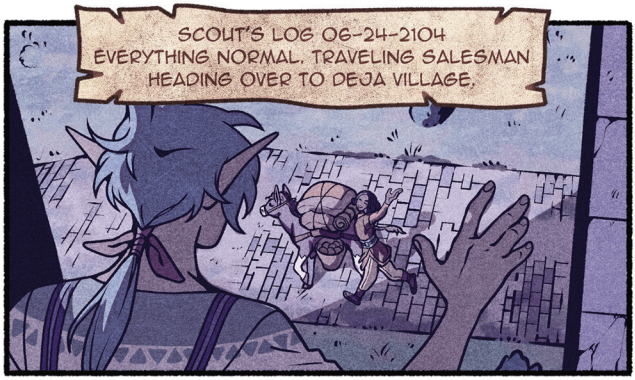
I will wait for you in Hateno Village, so long as whatever evil befell the fort has not continued there. If it has… I dare not think of it. There must be some refuge left, and I will find it if I have to walk a hundred days more.

Until we meet again, my love. Who can say if it will be in this life, with the world crashing down around us, but I will look for you in the next life, and the next, until I find you and bring you back home.

May the light of the Goddess shine upon you.

***

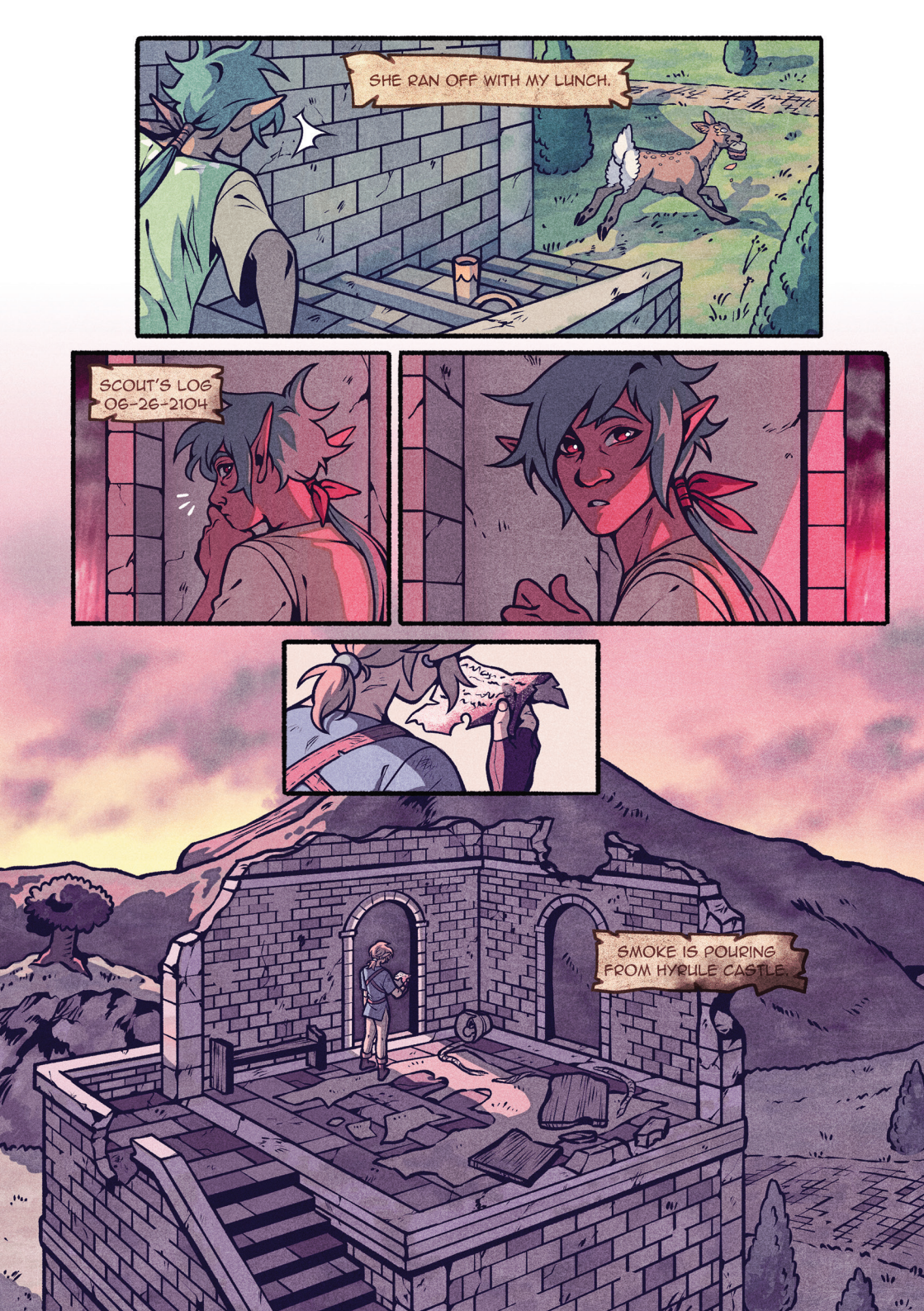
SCOUT'S LOG 06-23-2104
EVERYTHING NORMAL.


SCOUT'S LOG 06-24-2104
EVERYTHING NORMAL. TRAVELING SALESMAN HEADING OVER TO DEJA VILLAGE.

I EXPECT BABA WILL BE HAPPY.

SCOUT'S LOG 06-25-2104
EVERYTHING NORMAL.

SAW A DOE TODAY.


SHE RAN OFF WITH MY LUNCH.
SCOUT'S LOG
06-26-2104
SMOKE IS POURING FROM HYRULE CASTLE.

Letters from Mabe to Tabantha

words by Natalie Claire

My dear friend,

The air in Mabe is so different, but I'm becoming acquainted. Here it envelops every breathing thing, thick like honey, sunshine and expansive sky, but I am accustomed to the crispness and cold frost of Tabantha. I write to you now as I sit, at my window, as little spots of light flicker through the trees and onto the objects of my house, illuminating them strangely, as with everything else in this town that light touches. Life here is so different, and the softness of the air has yet to become a friend to me. Increasingly, I long to feel something familiar, anything recognizable, but only one thing has caught my eye—

To the north I can see the spires of Hyrule Castle. I remember fondly, in our youth, when we would sit and watch the sun rise in the east, silhouetting the castle beautifully. We dreamt of a life within those walls. Now, as the veil of distance and childhood is lifted, a life like that does not seem as inviting… But I still have caught myself staring at those tall, arched windows from time to time, looking to catch a glimpse of movement. I wonder if the princess wishes she was someone like us. Maybe a little bit of my younger self is still alive in me, deep down.

You would love it here, in the warm verdure. Beyond the boundaries of this village we are surrounded by fields for miles, and from here I can see the long grasses sway like the ocean. I know Tabantha lies past those fields, and I know you are there, too, somewhere on the horizon. I am not as far away as I feel. There are so many people here, more than there ever were at home… Even now, I hear my neighbors laughing in the streets below. But I still cannot dispense this feeling of isolation. It is clinging to me like my memories of Tabantha, and my memories of you.

I will see to it that this is sent to you, and I await your response. I think I will catch one of the merchants moving west and put this letter in their care, so it will arrive swiftly. It has only been a few nights, but loneliness is not something to be underestimated. I'm afraid I will forget your face by the time we meet again.

I am thinking of you, always.

With love

My dear friend,

The seasons are truly changing in this part of Hyrule. This morning I awoke to quite an affirming blanket of snow on the ground, and I realized just how long it has been since I've seen a landscape like the one in Mabe today. It was a soft reminder of home, one I am already hesitant to let go of... No matter how life presented itself in Tabantha Village, there was certain reassurance found in that monotony of snow.

This may sound strange, but late at night, when I am on the edge of sleep, I can see those white, rolling hills of the village so vividly. I see the mountains and the icy rivers of Hebra, just as I did in childhood, I see my hands, my footprints in the snow, I see my mother's face, whole and reflective like the moon. I see yours.

I dreamt last night I was sitting on that river bank above Hebra Plunge, staring down at myself in the water. It felt so real, but some bitter reason, no matter what I did, I could not recognize my own reflection. I was an outsider to my own body and mind, occupying a world I had no place in, looking down at someone I did not know. I continue to ask myself what this could mean, but I remain with only questions, and no answers...

I woke from sleep with a sort of residual homesickness, the kind that makes your whole body ache. As much as I wish I could dispense of that feeling for good, there was still something comforting about waking up to find that snow had fallen. The world greeted me at dawn as if it was an old friend.

Remember to stay warm.

With love

****

My dear friend,

I was walking home the evening before last, watching birds circle high above me, and a memory surfaced, one I have not thought of in years—

Do you remember during those warmer months, when your father would let us accompany him on his trips towards the Tabantha frontier? Those were the days when we hadn't travelled anywhere outside of the village, and every excursion past the boundaries of home felt like a lifetime to my childhood mind. I was too young at the time to remember what the occasions for these trips were, and as we grew older I never thought to ask, but the memories from such trips still linger… We would fall asleep as we left home and wake up as the highest tower of Rito Village came into view from behind the mountains. That feeling has stayed with me since then, along with the warm smell of pine and dust in the blue sky. No matter how much time goes on, I don't believe I'll ever forget it.

I remember wanting to see everything, and touch everything I could. Life felt so big and overwhelming and unknown, and we had only just begun to explore it. I wonder, would you want to go back and experience that feeling again, if it were possible? Even for just a moment? The world feels much smaller now than it did years ago— Or maybe now, I simply take up more space in it.

The passage of time recently has become obvious to me. It is hard to believe I've been in Mabe for almost two years. It has begun to feel like home here, but I believe part of my soul will always remain in Tabantha, buried somewhere deep in the snow…

I'm sorry. You tell me to look towards the future, but I cannot help dwelling on these old memories. Time passes by so quickly, and the only choice we're given is to continue along with it. We will never be children again, this I know. Isn't it strange how something can be so beautiful, yet so heartbreaking, all at once?

It is difficult to put into words how all of this made me feel on my way home. I just kept walking, and kept watching the birds.

With love

****

My dear friend,

Have I ever told you about the view from my bedroom window? When the air is clearest I am able to see all the way across Hyrule Field towards the Tabantha Hills from this spot on my bed. Years ago, on slower afternoons, I would go out into that big sea of billowing grasses and sit down, and watch wild horses graze in the distance, and imagine what the journey would be like if I walked all the way back to you. A fleeting, sunlit moment of peace in a life otherwise full of confusion... I do not have the time anymore for such excursions, but I do still think about it once every so often…

Time continues to pass quickly, to no one's surprise. Last winter, my neighbors had a son. I see them daily, and it astounds me how fast he is growing. On the days when they need help looking after him, I bring him to Hylia River just east of here, to let him wade in the shallow water and chase frogs around. I love watching him experience the world with such perfect, fragile simplicity… I often imagine what kind of person he will be when he's older, but for now it is enough just to watch him babble and laugh. One day he will be different, just as we all will be. More than anything, I want the world to nurture him gently as he lives in it. How beautiful it is, the ability to grow up.

I have a question to ask you, one that I have been considering for some time now. I know your birthday is quickly approaching, and in the past we have always settled for sending gifts back and forth… But, would you like it if I made a visit home this year, in time to celebrate with you? I feel terrible that I have not offered sooner, but the occasion to do so always seemed to pass me by without warning.

Please let me know. We have been apart for far too long.

With love

****

My dear friend,

I can hardly wait to see you again. In packing up my things, I came across my old coat in the back of my wardrobe, the one your mother made for me. There has not been a need for it in this fair Mabe weather, but I never had it in me to give it away… It still holds that faint smell of charcoal I had forgotten about…

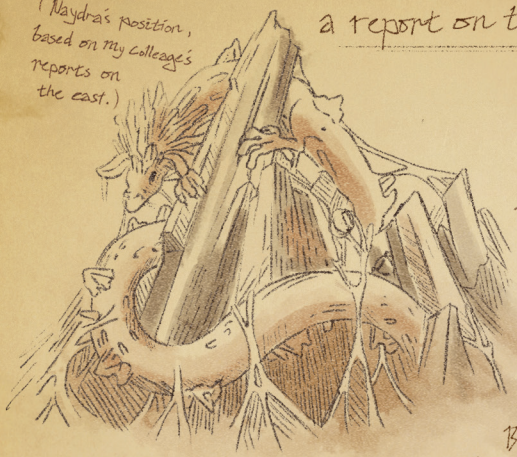
How much have you changed since I left all those years ago? I wonder, do you still have the first letter I wrote? As embarrassing as it is to say, I've kept all of yours. They serve as good medicine for when I find myself thinking of Tabantha. I try to imagine your voice speaking to me as I read them, but what a relief it will soon be to hear it from your own mouth instead.

I'm counting down the days. By the time you read this, I will most likely already be on my way...

Sent with great anticipation and all of my love

****

a report on the western frontier: Tabantha



(Naydra's position, based on my colleague's reports on the east.)

after the calamity. We soon noticed that the dragon Naydra, Hyrule's spirit of cold and ice, no longer took to the skies. My colleague, who works in East Hyrule) has made the dangerous climb toward the summit of Mount Lanayru. There, she discovered that the great Spirit sits atop the summit, coiled above an ancient spring - she is immobilised by the substance we know to be the 'Malice'. It is a dreadful thing to imagine the sorrow of such a magnificent beast, doomed to a slow and possibly endless descent into ruin.

But what does the Spirit of Eastern Hyrule have to do with the descent of our Western frontier? Rather, what can the frontier tell us about our Great Spirits? It was not long

after the calamity that sudden and significant climatic changes were reported on the Tabantha frontier -

.. Surges of snowfall heavier than ordinary, bracing & destructive winds, unseasonably cool temperatures...

Records (sparse though they are..) show us that Tabantha village was hard hit - beset by frequent, chaotic snowstorms. defending against increased Moblin attacks must have become impossible.

It's simply no wonder they had to leave.

Is it possible Naydra's corruption caused this upset, this imbalance?

The timing is uncanny..

(Mokoblins? Boblins?)

While chancing a better look at the ruins I found myself surrounded by a band of squatting Moblins & Bokoblins!

The old, abandoned homes have long been pillaged - repurposed into watchtowers and fire wood.

(their thermo-regulation is quite remarkable... only a loincloth!)

Plateau's Hiraeth

words by Guppy

The silence lays thick in places where the world has been forgotten. Quiet places, where nature has crept back over, tucking the buildings away under a blanket of moss, covering up the scars of a battle few lived to remember. Soft places, where the rain has worn the stones smooth, leaving only the ghosts of their designs visible in the sunlight, where the carpets have rotted away, the sticky remnants of woven fabric staining the floors and eventually withering away to worn threads. Only the wind breathed here, brushing the overgrown grass against the buildings, moving the loose dirt of the ruined paths and whistling through the broken windows.

In some of the crumbling, collapsed stone buildings, tucked into the corners which still benefited from the cover of the ruined floors above, there were odds and ends of that forgotten before-time. Some of the garrisons still had beds, the wood frames cracked down the center and the bedding long rotted away. The exchanges still had their flags, waving in the weak breeze of the tired land, going threadbare at the edges from the endless rain and wind. A house by the great roaring river, leaning precariously close to the sandy river edge, still had its glass window panes on the northern side, shining in the blood red moonlight.

One such lucky remnant, however, was more well hidden than the tattered flags, woven rugs, and lucky window glass of other fragments in Central Hyrule's plains. Cleverly stuffed beneath a heavy stone, in a wooden box under the floorboards of a house which was now little more than a charred skeleton, was a worn, leatherbound book, the pages slowly yellowing with age. There was a string stuffed into a page near the end, and a pencil nub abandoned in the box. A forgotten signature was scribbled onto the inside of the leather cover, worn away by the friction of the paper. It was lost before the book itself was lost.

The silence lays thick in places where the world has been forgotten. Quiet places, where nature has crept back over, tucking the buildings away under a blanket of moss, covering up the scars of a battle few lived to remember. Soft places, where the rain has worn the stones smooth, leaving only the ghosts of their designs visible in the sunlight, where the carpets

Link loves this place.
I think this is the most emotion he's ever shown!
Princess Zelda's
Favorite Book Store

have rotted away, the sticky remnants of woven fabric staining the floors and eventually withering away to worn threads. Only the wind breathed here, brushing the overgrown grass against the buildings, moving the loose dirt of the ruined paths and whistling through the broken windows.

In some of the crumbling, collapsed stone buildings, tucked into the corners which still benefited from the cover of the ruined floors above, there were odds and ends of that forgotten before-time. Some of the garrisons still had beds, the wood frames cracked down the center and the bedding long rotted away. The exchanges still had their flags, waving in the weak breeze of the tired land, going threadbare at the edges from the endless rain and wind. A house by the great roaring river, leaning precariously close to the sandy river edge, still had its glass window panes on the northern side, shining in the blood red moonlight.

One such lucky remnant, however, was more well hidden than the tattered flags, woven rugs, and lucky window glass of other fragments in Central Hyrule's plains. Cleverly stuffed beneath a heavy stone, in a wooden box under the floorboards of a house which was now little more than a charred skeleton, was a worn, leatherbound book, the pages slowly yellowing with age. There was a string stuffed into a page near the end, and a pencil nub abandoned in the box. A forgotten signature was scribbled onto the inside of the leather cover, worn away by the friction of the paper. It was lost before the book itself was lost.

No one would ever know who wrote the words within its covers. If the book ever was found, it was likely the words would be lost by then, faded away by time's encroaching cleansing. Perhaps some treasure hunter would uncover them, or a would-be-historian, or just someone who happened past and needed a patch of shelter from the cold rain, catching their boot on the rock that didn't belong and getting curious.

Whoever might or might not find the little book, its memories would likely still be forgotten. Those who might have recognized the handwriting within were long gone, in graveyards buried in yet more rubble, or those nameless graves which had come quickly after the destruction—or simply...gone. No one would ever know exactly what had happened to the author, nor to the thousands of others like them who had been lost to death in obscurity.

But their words would live for a little while longer in between the leather covers. And when they too eventually rotted away, like the old door frame blown over in the last storm, well. Hyrule would keep breathing. Their memory would join the sighs of a million other weary ghosts, waiting to be remembered by the few who had survived the horrors of that day.

Locked in the crumpled, yellowing pages of a forgotten leather bound journal, these words would live on just a little while longer. And there was always the chance that someone might stumble across them, after all.

Whether the words would be found, however, remained to be seen. Regardless, the words had been written by one of many souls whose name would remain lost to time—their features a blur, their likes, dislikes, the little details of their life which made them whoever

they were—they would never be dug up from under the stone. Those fragments of them were long gone, now, never to be found or remembered again.

But their voice would live on, even if their pages returned to dust, the wooden box sinking into the ground and rejoining the earth. Their voice would still remain, if only in the whispers of long forgotten goddesses and spirits, but this honor would be enough.

More than enough.

****

Another group of those pompous folk from the north went by today. They dragged their big lumpy carts through, too. The ones with the coverings on them—better than ours. It makes Papa mad, just the sight of those brightly colored things.

One of them had a great big flower on it—blue, five petals—must have been a silent princess, I guess. There used to be one of those growing from the old watchtower, in the shade along the cracked wall. It never got very big, though. Poor thing wilted after a good rain.

There were so many of them—that was what was odd. Dozens and dozens of carriages blowing their way through town. So many they kicked up the dirt all along the road. There was such a fog I could hardly see Marsh's house across the way.

The silent princess one was one of the later ones. Most of the ones earlier had designs on them too, but they were all drab and boring. Iven went fanatic over an older cart with horses painted in deep brown, jumping over a fence. It looked like the ranch Papa had me deliver to back during harvest, the one by Mabe, farther north.

I wish we still had Malo. Then maybe Iven wouldn't be so sad about any picture of a horse. Papa was talking about finding him one of those stable dogs—maybe it'll cheer him up a bit. There's no way we can afford a new horse, not so close to spring, but still…

Wonder if more of those fancy folk will go rolling past today. I don't think I've ever seen so many at once, and nobody seems to know why they were passing through. What do they have to do up there anyway? There's not much besides the old Temple. And the nuns are nice and all, but I can't imagine talking to them for longer than a few minutes.

They're up to something, that's for certain. And I don't know if it'll be anything good, if so many of them are going to keep coming here.

It almost makes me miss home even more. But we're stuck here for at least another season. Papa said that if this year goes well enough in town, we'll at least be able to visit Grandmother. Of course that will be harder now without Malo to help us get there quick, but we'll manage.

Anything to get away from this road and all these fancy people who can hardly keep their pretty little painted carriages on the path. All my best aprons were covered in dust after they went past, and for what? So they could flaunt their wealth? Please. As if anyone in this ramshackle place needed reminding we were a halfway house. Those goons in the

barracks remind us often enough. Like a circus cast, that lot.

Have to go now. Papa's calling for me. Something about Telith's cart…

****

Telith's cart broke down—Papa's been trying to fix it for days now. Not even Iven can get the wheels to straighten out again. I figured they would have given up by now but they aren't showing any signs of stopping yet.

Nobody around here has enough money to just up and buy a new cart though. The roads are so bumpy and water logged...it ruins even the best of wagons in a season. And it isn't like any of us have much help from the folks up north. No, they just like to parade past in their new wagons every once in a while.

I hate it here. I want to go back home…

****

The nuns are so strange. They don't come down from the Plateau often, but when they do, they wear the same smiles and heavy eyes as the stone goddess in the middle of town. They look at you like you've already died, and they're the only ones keeping the goddess from reigning fire onto you.

They give me the creeps. But they buy from us, so I can't complain.

Papa's been having me run the stall lately. He's making more and more trips on foot to Mabe now, and it wears him out like a fight with a talus. By the time he reaches town most times, it's well past midday and too late to try to open. So it's up to me now, to get things going in the morning.

It isn't too bad really. Everyone around here knows us by now. Even the nuns and priestesses from the Temple know my face at least, with how often they come down for supplies.

There's one who always asks me if I've prayed. I made the mistake of saying no once. She dragged me all the way to the Temple. It wasn't too terrible, since there was no one around. But it was embarrassing to explain to Iven why I had disappeared for so long.

I always forget how beautiful it is inside. Somehow that place makes gray stone and soggy moss look ethereal. The stained glass helps too, of course. When the sun hits right, it turns the inside of the Temple into a kaleidoscope of different colors and shapes.

And sometimes, when there's no one around, it's like...the Temple comes alive around you. It happened when the nun left me there to pray. The sun came through the glass by the goddess statue, and when it hit the goddess's face...it was like she was really smiling, not just—not just a statue, but the Goddess, smiling. At me of all people.

If I'm honest...it was kind of nice. Being in the Temple when it was quiet, nothing but the goddess statue and the sun through the windows. It made it feel...more real, I guess.

Like Hylia was really right there. I don't know. But I've never prayed harder than just then.

Now whenever that nun comes down she makes me pray. Usually at the goddess statue in town, but she always says hello when I do make the trek up to the Temple. Guess she's glad she convinced me.

I wonder how many people they've got up there? I've only seen...maybe ten or so of the Temple folk. And I know there aren't any settlements or anything like that. Still, the Plateau is pretty big for being that empty. Wonder what they do up there all day.

At least there haven't been any more parades as of late. The northerners have all trundled back home, I think. Whatever they were doing up there, I guess it's over.

Papa seemed sad about that. I think he enjoyed the increased business. The northerners might have been a bit...picky about our stock, but they bought from us anyway.

Now that I think about it...we haven't seen much of anyone from the Plateau since the party left. I wonder if they took the sages with them? But what would the northerners need with the Temple sages? Or the nuns? All they do is hold their ceremonies and pray to the goddess like the rest of us.

I haven't even seen the nun who makes me pray...town's been so quiet...

I think it unnerves Papa, it being so empty now that they've all gone off. He said something about sending me up to the Temple, if no one comes down in the next few days. Usually I'd kick up a fuss, but...well, I am curious. And I think it would be nice to go up there again, see the great goddess statue and all the stained glass...maybe even pray. Maybe Hylia will have answers this time.

I'll have to look for honey if I go. We're nearly out…

****

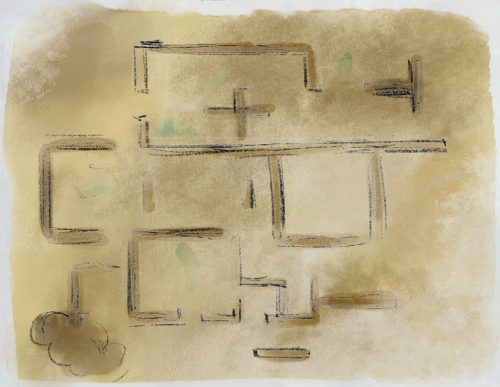
How do I always forget how lovely it is up here? I need to stop getting stuck in town. The Plateau is so much better than the dump down there.

It's always so much bigger than I remember. The entrance courtyard, everyone knows. Big columns and dozens of flags, a long paved stone walkway that snakes all the way from the gates to the Temple doors, with the smaller temples below it. The fountains, the flagpoles, all the pomp and grandeur that Castle Town could afford.

But that's hardly the whole Plateau. Sure, that's about the most that people ever notice—the only thing people come up here for, in my experience—but it's far from the only thing around.

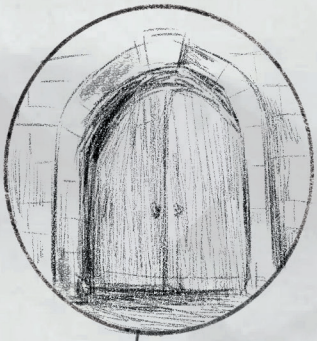
There's the stream, and the lake, and the woods, all to the west of the Temple. It's far from the largest set of woodlands in Hyrule, but it's surprisingly big for how few people seem to care to explore it. You'd be amazed what kinds of things you can find in there. I've dug up all sorts of plants—mushrooms, nuts, even some nightshade and a few wild

Eastern Abbey



The abbey is conveniently located next to the Temple of Time and the Ja Baij Shrine.

It's many partitions suggest it may have offered several chambers for monks, as well as a second floor.



These stones share strange similarity to the ones found in Hyrule castle. some of my peers speculate the ancient castle was built in this area.

A great battle was held here about 100 years ago and damaged the Abbey horribly. Several decayed guardians are scattered across these grounds. They seem to be inactive... for now.

carrots—and there's plenty of boar and pigeons around to practice shooting. When we first moved, Papa took me up here to learn how to shoot a bow properly. We still come up here for boar when the weather's nice enough.

Behind the woods, there's Mount Hylia. Somehow, the snow up there manages to cover most of the upper half of the Plateau. There's an old cabin, by the entrance leading from the Temple. I think the priestesses used it when they'd go up to the shrine on the mountain. But it looks pretty worn out now. The old bridge across the river is still in good shape, though, so it's not too difficult to trek up to the mountain, even without their little cabin as a waypoint. I much prefer the climb anyway.

Past the abbey there's more woods, too, but someone planted birch there, ages and ages ago. It looks just like the woods around Kolomo. It's as good a spot as any to chop firewood, though, especially from the pine trees closer to the Plateau edge. Although there are a bunch of bees over there, especially by the birch trees. Iven got chased by them once, all the way to the Plateau's entrance. He was in a full panic, but I couldn't stop laughing.

My favorite spot, though, is down the old path west from the entrance, past the lake and deep into the woods. There's an old, chipped talus in a clearing over there, but as long as you don't bother it, it won't bother you.

I've hidden out in the woods past there, for now. Papa sent me up to visit the Temple (see if the nuns are still around, I think), but I'm taking my time in getting there. It's just so quiet up here. No one lives in these woods—except the little critters in the trees and a few wild boars. Even they don't mind me too much. Not if I'm quiet enough.

It's so different up here than it is in town. It's quieter. There's no road, except to lead to the Temple, no houses, no crowded stalls or shouting visitors. There aren't any people up here at all, at least not this far out. There's only the stream, and the trees, and the strange shrine by the wall.

I wonder what that old thing is for. I've never seen anyone go inside. Though I did see some Sheikah poking around at it a few months back. They didn't seem to make much progress. I wonder what they were trying to do with it.

There was one of those back near home, too—up on the hill behind town. Big and brown and strange. It's been there as long as anyone can remember, as far as I know. I should ask Grandmother about it next time we write…

Someone left a cooking pot in the woods. I've commandeered it for now. I even scrounged up some mushrooms and caught a fish in the little lake by the entrance. It isn't a lunch worthy of the King, but it's good enough for me.

Sitting here like this almost reminds me of home. But it's so much greener here than it is back home. So many more strange plants, far less sand. It's warmer at home, and less... maintained, I suppose. Wilder.

Not that it isn't wild here, too, of course. It's just a different sort of wild. Everything is different here, compared to home. The trees are so tall, birds calling in short little chirps; even the sun seems gentler here, softer as it cuts through the trees and hits me. Maybe the chill from Mount Hylia is taking the edge off. I wouldn't know. Either way, the breeze is quite nice.

I can hear the Temple bell from here. It must be noon. I wonder if they'll have the doors open today. The last time Papa sent me up here, everything was closed up.

They're doing something—and I don't know why they don't tell us down below. It can't be one of the usual ceremonies or offerings, those aren't for weeks yet. Something else is going on in there, and I want to know what it is. All this mystery gives me a bad feeling.

Papa might not be concerned, but all the quiet up here actually makes me nervous. I'd usually take comfort in it, compared to the bustle of the marketplace, but...now it just seems like something is wrong. Why else would they keep the Temple closed up? Why else would all those people from the north come down here? What business did they have with the Temple?

Maybe I'll go and give a peek in through the windows…

****

I've got to tell Iven. I don't know who else to tell, but I've got to tell someone.

I don't know what they were doing in the Temple, but all the nuns and the priestesses were there—maybe praying—at the goddess statue, and so was the King. No one else would wear that shade of blue, and I've never seen anyone with a beard so ridiculous. The Princess was there too—she didn't seem too happy about that, but what do I know?

And a boy—maybe the Princess's age, but he seemed pretty short, to be honest—Hylian, for sure, and dressed like a Royal Guard—he was there too, but I have even less of a clue what he was there for. I've never seen him in town. He can't be from Gatepost, and he can't have been living on the Plateau. No one lives on the Plateau but the folks from the Temple. Maybe he was there just to guard the Princess and the King? But it didn't seem like it...

and he can't have been living on the Plateau. No one lives on the Plateau but the folks from the Temple. Maybe he was there just to guard the Princess and the King? But it didn't seem like it...

The Temple was all decorated too, like it is for the ceremonies. Garlands of safflina, violets, nightshade—I swear, some of them were even silent princesses—all along the pews and the walls, and draped on the smaller statues by the goddess. The nuns were in their full regalia, and they even had their stones displayed. There was music coming from the organ, and they even rang the bell a few times.

They were having some kind of ceremony of course, but unlike anything I've ever seen before. Prayer is normal enough, but to bring out all the nuns, all the stones, all the

decorations...I couldn't hear through the glass what they were saying, but it had to be pretty important—especially for the King to be there.

When did he even get up here? Shouldn't we have seen the procession in town? I haven't heard anyone talk about something like that. They must have snuck up there, somehow...But why would the King sneak onto the Plateau? And what ceremony were they doing in there?

I've got to talk to Iven about what I saw. Maybe he'll know something I don't…

****

Another earthquake went round today. Not as bad as the one last week, but enough to spook the cows in the pasture into a full run. Papa had to help wrangle them back to their paddocks it was so bad.

It sent the marketplace into a tizzy of course. More of the rich folks from the north have been coming through, and more soldiers from the garrisons too. The soldiers didn't seem too surprised about the quake. I wonder if they've been happening elsewhere?

Makes me think about that strange ceremony in the Temple. I tried to ask one of the nuns about it—the one who lets me in the Temple all the time—but she got this funny look on her face and told me to pray. I did, of course, but it would have helped if I knew what I was supposed to be praying for.

I still don't know what the King and the Princess were doing up there that day.

I asked Papa about the boy, though, and he said he's seen him before with some of the soldiers. Apparently he's some kind of prodigy. He was a knight, and I guess he caught the King's eye, what with him being a Royal Guard already. He seems a bit young for a job like that if you ask me. 'Course no one's asking.

Whatever they were doing up there, they left as mysteriously as they came, because no one else in town seemed to know they'd been around. I asked almost everyone about who was visiting, and they didn't say anything out of the usual. I even listened to Tallie ramble about her uncle from Tabantha for fifteen minutes, and didn't get anything out of it except that wildberries are apparently in season again.

of it except that wildberries are apparently in season again.

Never mind that they don't grow here. But thanks, Tallie.

I shouldn't be so grumpy about it. It's none of my business anyway. My business starts and ends in the market stall, and until we get rid of all these durians Iven bought off that Gerudo merchant, the whole place is going to smell like rotten eggs and horse droppings. He claims he bought them cheap, and I believe him, but they sure aren't selling. You'd have to have a much bolder taste than most people around here to eat this stuff willingly.

Maybe another earthquake will roll through and I can "misplace" the durians in the lake…

****

Got a letter from Grandmother today. Apparently that quake a few days back hit home as well, and it nearly toppled the monument. Everyone was scrambling to fix it before it broke apart. I hope it's still legible. I'd hate to see it destroyed. It's so beautiful at night.

Wonder why there's been so many quakes lately...and for it to go as far as home is a bit strange.

I guess the quake did more damage than we thought at first. At least for the people up on the Plateau, anyway. I guess it toppled one of the pillars by the entrance. They brought a bunch of the soldiers from the garrison through to help repair it. Must be awful work. They all looked pretty worn out when they came back through town late in the day. Tired enough to stop at our stall, anyway. Not that I'm complaining about that, of course.

Anything to get rid of these durians…

****

Everyone's panicking again because the Princess went through town.

It wasn't exactly a social visit. All she did was ride through town on horseback, and it's thrown everyone into a state. You would think the Goddess herself had come to inspect the market stall with how harried Papa was.

That boy was with her—the one who was in the Temple too, the knight or whatever. I guess he's her protection.

They were headed toward the coliseum, if I had to guess. There's not much else over there that would interest them. Unless they were going all the way around to the big garrison, I have no idea what else they could be going toward.

But who knows what they're up to? The Royal Family doesn't exactly give us any hints of when they're going to blow through town. Maybe they would know in Castle Town, but down here, all we ever find out is that they're passing through, and that's only when it actually happens. Makes sense that we still don't know what they were doing up in the Temple.

That doesn't make it any less annoying, of course.

Papa says this sort of thing is normal. To be fair, we get even less information back home. Not that the Princess would ever be seen riding around Lurelin anyway. I think Grandmother would laugh, if she did. It is a funny thought—the Princess slogging through the sand, doing...whatever it is she does, anyway.

It seems strange that she would ride through town and not go up to the Plateau. Most people only come here for the Plateau, after all. And as much as I complain, the Temple is important, of course. I guess it doesn't hold much interest for a young princess, though.

But why would she be around here at all? It's just like that ceremony in the Temple—

she shows up randomly, and I can't sort out why. No one else has got a clue either. All the excuses people can come up with seem wrong.

Something's still fishy, and I wish I could figure out what it is…

****

Papa came back from Mabe today. He'd gone to trade again for a few days, since we've been getting so much from the other exchanges lately. I knew something was wrong as soon as I saw him. He looked like he'd seen a ghost. He told me to close the stall, too. I should have known then that something was really wrong.

He said the village was next to empty, which is already strange. When he went to the trading post, there were only a few of the usual folks around from the other towns, and I guess they were all crowded around the village's mayor.

Apparently they got news from Castle Town the day before. One of the sages read a prophecy that said the Calamity's going to return.

They don't know when. Not that it matters. Most people seem to think it's just some scary story to tell your kids before bed. Though I guess if you tell them it isn't, and that the monster is real, and going to return to destroy their lives, they have plenty of reason to be afraid.

Mabe's mostly a trade stop, so I guess it makes sense that it would empty out when people heard. Maybe that's why it's been so quiet here, too. Not that there are many folks who live around here, anyway.

It's unsettling. How quiet it's gotten. Almost as upsetting as the thought of the Calamity returning one day.

I just hope it isn't going to be soon…

****

Things seem to have settled down again. Which is a funny thought. We know even better now that the Calamity's coming—the King actually sent out messengers this time—but everyone seems content to...forget it for now.

It's almost offensive, how quickly some people have forgotten. It's only been a few weeks, and by what news we get from elsewhere, others are at least trying to prepare for what's to come. But everyone here is acting like we never got word of the Calamity in the first place.

Not that there's much we can do from here. None of us are heroes. Most of the folks in town are just farmers, or travelers headed somewhere else. Sure, a few of us could bat back a couple of bokoblins when they get too close to the fence line, but beyond that, we aren't exactly battle ready.

They're recruiting for soldiers in the market. A few Royal Guards came through town asking for volunteers. From what they said, they aren't fighting yet. Just training.

Papa thinks they need cannon fodder.

I'm more partial to think they need people at every garrison now, and to help dig up those Divine Beasts. The nuns were whispering about it last time they came down. Apparently they found one of them out in Tabantha and another in Gerudo, but there are meant to be four.

Wonder where that little knight got off to…

****

I've snuck back up to the Plateau again. I can't stand to be in town another second. Not when everyone's being such idiots.

The Princess rode through again with that knight, only this time, he had the Sword—the Sword.

I guess I should have seen that coming, with how much everybody talked about the kid, but it...well, I guess it's just strange to me to see someone carrying the legendary blade around the marketplace. Justifies some of the odd looks he's been getting, I suppose.

Either way, though, he's still just a kid, and that doesn't mean everyone has permission to lose their minds over him. The whole town practically swarmed him.

Poor kid. He looked as uncomfortable as Iven trying to catch the sheep who escaped their pen, with all those people crowded around him. The Princess mostly left him to flounder, too. Eventually he gave the crowd the slip, but still. Shouldn't have happened in the first place.

I gave the stall to Iven after that and made my own retreat. It's getting more and more annoying to be here rather than home. I wish Papa would let us go back.

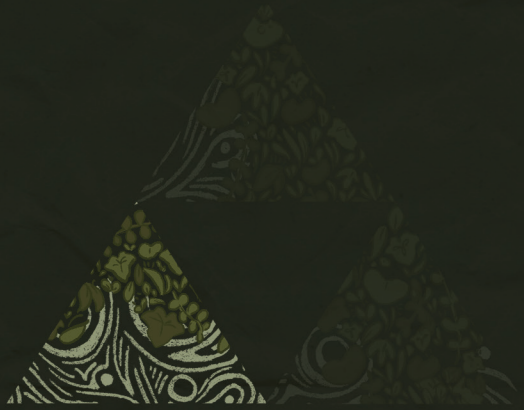
At least it's still quiet up here on the Plateau. Nobody's bothered to come up here, despite the doom hanging over our heads. The woods are the same as last time I snuck up here, and there's no mysterious Temple ceremonies to distract me. I can just sit here for a while, and try to sort out my thoughts, I guess.

If the Calamity does come back...I hope we can go home. Is that a terrible thing to wish for?

I wonder how long we have…

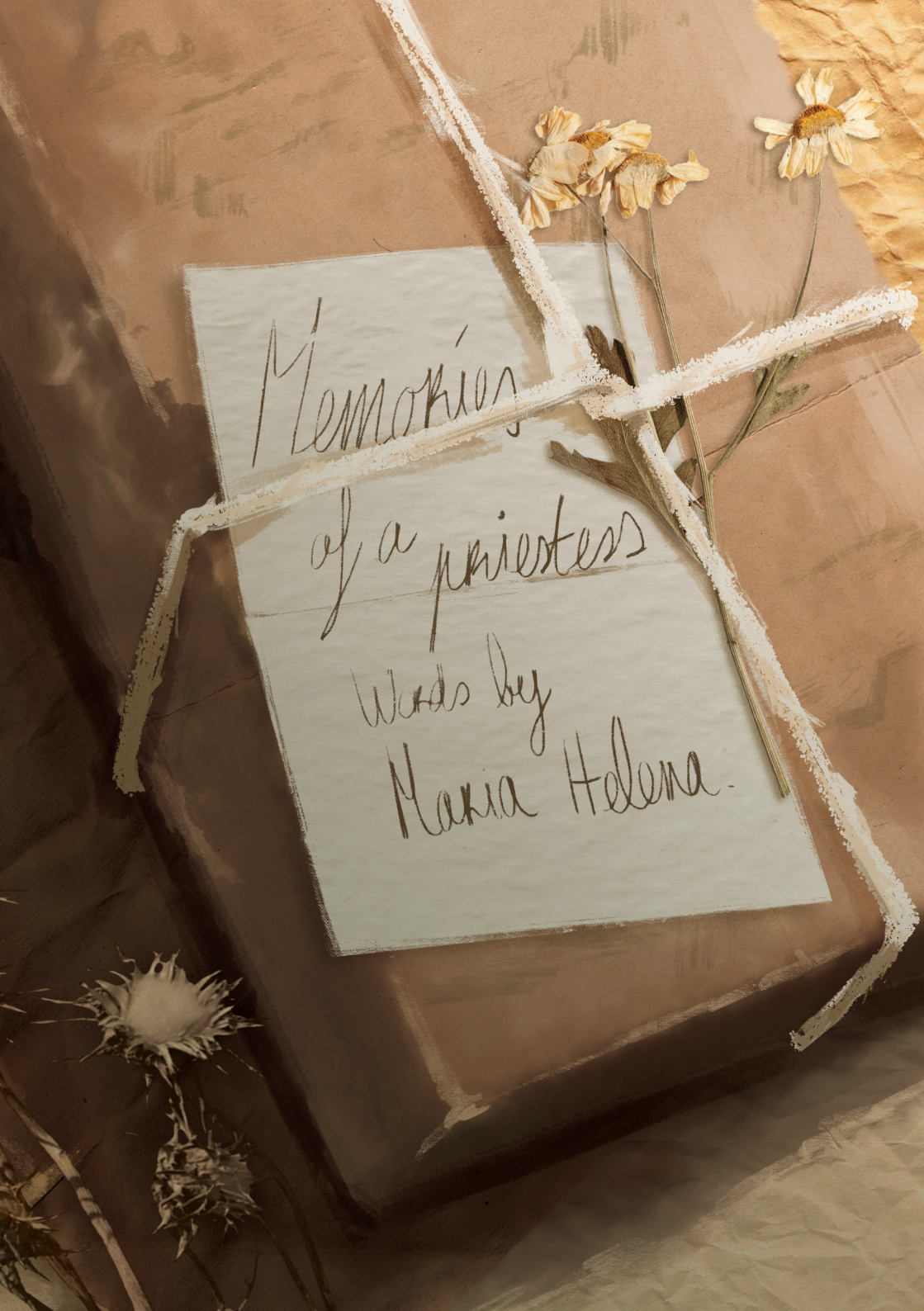
2021

ISBN 978-0-7148-7654-3
Published by Phaidon Press Limited
2 Cooperage Yard
London E15 2QR
www.phaidon.com



Those who Pray(ed)

THANKYOURLUCKYSTARS13


Memories
of a priestess
Words by
Maria Helena.

A package has arrived for you. It goes ignored, for the most part, until late afternoon. You're knee-deep in research, tools and plans scattered all about when you finally notice its presence atop your desk. An assistant must have placed it there at some point.

The work you conduct at Hateno Lab is delicate and requires your full attention. For all you know, you're currently on the verge of something profound—but the parcel is hard to ignore, covered in red stamps marked "**Important**", "**Confidential**", "**Priority**", and so on. There's also a label attached, and a letter tucked beneath the wrapping twine, both bearing neat, slanted script. When you recognize the handwriting, your iron focus is crushed.

An old friend has sent you something. 'How strange,' you think. They weren't the kind to send gifts.

You push your work aside in an attempt to find scissors but no luck. Instead, you foist the letter free, remarkably without tear, and open it to read.

"My dear friend,

I'm certain you've heard the news already. I'm not sorry; leaving the league is the second-best decision I've ever made. The first is embarking on my own. It's high time we both broke away. Perhaps it's the Sheikah in me, but I believe mystery is a greater motivator than personal glory to uncover what we have uncovered.

I write to tell you my expedition at the Great Plateau has been granted crown approval. The Eastern Abbey site is now under my jurisdiction, with future sites in the area to come. Thank you for speaking to the queen on my behalf—I'm happy to see your new position has some pull. The lab's gone to waste since Lady Purah passed, and I can't think of anyone better suited to follow in her footsteps than you. You've earned it.

Funding secure, we've moved on to the third phase of our dig: collecting and cataloging. But that's not all. Several months ago, we unearthed genuine pre-Calamitic texts written, no less, by a priestess of Hylia.

Personal accounts—a journal dated a few hundred years before the Golden Age, rather well-preserved. We've been able to transcribe portions of it thus far. Whomever this priestess was, she was troubled. Her thoughts express...interesting implications.

We've taken to calling her Nayru (which likely has you scowling). I've cause to believe Nayru's writings give credence to my theories on the goddess and the origins of Hyrule (which undoubtedly has you scowling).

Enclosed is a selection of these transcriptions. It's not much, but you understand the delicacy of my situation. I can't risk 'competitors' sullying this find.

Please, take a look. I hope it will help you reconsider my offer. I'd love to work with you again, like in the old days.

Your obedient servant,

Sul Karn, (former) Lead Researcher and Archaeologist of the Hylian League

P.S. I've also packed those little honeyed candies you like so much. Consider it a bribe."

A degree more carefully this time, you unwrap the parcel to find a thick binder of documents and, yes, a bag of sweets. The documents are bound and meticulously indexed. A flip-through reveals sketches, blueprints, diagrams, and transcriptions in a familiar hand, all heavily footnoted.

At the sight of this, your curiosity is officially piqued. Sul is many things but structured they are not. Whatever they have found, it must be compelling.

You decide to put on some tea and review the documents. Your next great discovery can wait a little longer.

*

The first pages contain sketches tagged with brief descriptions. Sul's artistry reflects dedication and obsession. They've drawn an overlook of the ruins, guardian remains, various relics, and the mysteriously named Temple of Time, looming overhead, all in great detail. There is also a rendition of what the abbey may have been, at its prime.

A quaint picture, Sul depicts a simple compound, built in the image of the temple. There is a garden; stained glass windows; a statue of Hylia in the early classical style; and portrayals of pilgrims and priestesses who may have lived and thrived there long ago. Sul writes beneath:

> "The abbey is the oldest structure in the area, after the temple. It was used by several different Hylian convents until the Age of Calamity. A true testament to history—and possibly the bridge between fact and myth."

You pause to trace the last line of text. You adore Sul, but they're something of a... radical. They maintain several less-than-accepted theories on the history of Hyrule, the most controversial being on the goddess Hylia. Unfortunately, since the Calamity, few records can support or disapprove their theories. It hasn't stopped them from being ostracized from academic circles, however.

After the sketches, Sul's notes begin with a discussion of the initial find. As you read, you're taken back to your days in the field, hands caked in dirt, the sun hot on your back, Sul by your side.

> "We recovered an eight-by-eight inch tin box (item ID #33) at the northwestern section of the excavation site. I believe the box has been buried there since before the Calamity and would have stayed that way if not for structural collapse. The box was sealed with a simple key-lock which, unfortunately, needed to be broken."

> "Inside, we found a leather-bound journal (item ID #34). Approx. seven-by-eight inches, page count unknown. The leather binding is in fragile condition, while its contents have suffered a degree of damage from time and the elements, though much of it appears salvageable."

"This marks our first find of any real significance. The team is elated, while I'm optimistically cautious. The journal, as well-preserved as it appears, is entirely illegible to me. I'll have to reach out to my contacts in the league. With any luck, I haven't burnt all my bridges yet."

**

"My assistant, Felix, suggests the journal was purposely hidden. We've since determined that it was buried where the private quarters were situated, beneath the flooring. It wasn't until Egrir, a former colleague who worked the Tanger Canyon temple site, wrote back that I openly agreed with Felix. According to Egrir, ancient priestesses were disallowed personal items as part of their service to Hylia. Today, this tradition is unpopular but not unheard of."

"Additionally, the style of writing used is several hundred years old, predating classical Hylian and Gerudo styles. The snippet I provided Egrir with was more than enough to convince him to come on in an advisory capacity. Once he arrives, we can begin unraveling this lost priestesses' secrets—if any are to be found."

The next pages contain scrupulous notes on the transcription process, linguistical leeway Egrir took, and preservation of the original material. Sul's process thus far is unorthodox; rarely are such things done on-site. Transcribing ancient texts is best done in a laboratory—such as your own.

You stop that thought while you're ahead, allowing a small bubble of envy to pop and dissipate before moving on.

The transcriptions Sul included are sparse, with many passages missing. Nonetheless, they offer a glimpse into the unknown, a time of legend and folklore—beliefs which died with your ancestors.

'Nayru' writes over a string of dates in an unknown calendar (similar to Zoran, at a glance). The first reads:

{Trans. #01}
"Winter has arrived. [*Unintelligible*] tells me fewer pilgrims come to pray.
[*Unintelligible*], the temple stands silent. Day [and] night, its doors remain [shut]. I am not alone in my worry.
"It has been many moons since we were graced with the [voice]. The abbess [lit. 'great mother'] demands patience, [and] I try not to defy her."

Additionally, you see that Sul has added their thoughts to the transcriptions, via supplements. The first reads:

{Supplement #01}

"What most fascinates me here is Egrir's translation of 'voice'. He says the root word is Gerudo, meaning 'vision' or 'premonition' but contextually, voice is more appropriate. Most likely this voice refers to Hylia. However, only royalty and chosen individuals can hear the voice of the goddess.

"—And to think, goddess worship once called for rank and obedience. This too contradicts our current relationship with Hylia."

It *is* fascinating. Hylian today is a hodgepodge language borrowed and adapted by the other races of Hyrule. It's created a common speech understood by everyone. However, on paper, Zoran is indiscernible from Goron to the average Hylian person. Ancient and classical texts suffer greater divergence in style; from formal to informal, until the Golden Age of Sheikah technology, there wasn't a universal written language.

The transcriptions continue, in various states of completeness, with topics ranging from the mundane to the increasingly curious. You highlight a few for personal analysis, with Sul's thoughts attached underneath.

{Trans. #04}
"[...] The archives [lit. 'memory room'] grow as visitors wane.
    The [elder] sisters do not understand why I have been charged with this duty [and] neither do I   it is not our way to write but I take my charges [seriously]
"[...] I see [it] in their eyes, the same doubt I carry."

{Supplement #04}

"This is the only blatant indication we've found of the priestess' rank. Based on other references, Egrir believes she may have held a title equivalent to 'archivist' or, literally, 'memory-keeper'. It was an important role at other ancient convents, but I get the sense our priestess wasn't held in high esteem if she kept a secret journal. Unfortunately, we've yet to find any evidence of an archive on site.

"Felix and the others rather not call her 'archivist', however. With no influence by me, the team has started calling her Nayru instead."

You roll your eyes upon reading this. Of course.

{Trans. #08}
"[...] this month's offerings have been made. Dried fruits, meats, and [*Unintelligible*], laid at the foot of [Mt. Hylia]. I led meditation at the [pond] [and] offered a sip of blessed water to a pilgrim, our first in weeks."

⟨Supplement #08⟩
"Mount Hylia is not mentioned by name, but it's most likely the mountain she references. Interestingly, the word for 'mountain' is used in other entries (identifiable with Gerudo root words again), but here the mountain is addressed as a person—as a 'she', in a manner befitting the goddess."

{Trans. #09}
"[Preparation] for the trials have begun. [...] We have selected our three [vassals]. I am to [oversee] their [training] over the coming months. [...] it is difficult. Again, the abbess stresses patience [...] to send three young girls [alone] to the springs weighs on my mind."

⟨Supplement #09⟩
"Egri tells me 'vassal' has several meanings in both classical Hylian and ancient Gerudo. In Hylian, it's a title given to the royal princesses when anointed with their sacred powers. We believe these three priestesses served a similar function, given the context."

Your note-taking comes to a halt when reaching this passage. You have a feeling Sul took liberties when they wrote 'we'. The appointment of a princess' holy duties is a custom spanning as far back as the establishment of the kingdom—into legend. It's also exclusive to the royal family, highly revered by society since the defeat of the Calamity.

Sul's implication borders on sacrilegious. Unfortunately, their thoughts only grow more blasphemous, as do that of the priestess.

{Trans. #12}
"First of the three has left for [Faron] I packed turnips to keep her strong [and] fashioned a cloak [for her], as is tradition. The journey is long. I pray [Faron] greets her with clear skies.
"The [shrine] has been [neglected? misused?] for too long. Her trial calls for prayer, to bathe in [her] warm waters [and] stand vigil [but] [Faron]'s tests are for the brave, [and] we are short of bravery we are hopeful [but] I feel [*Unintelligible*]."

{Supplement #12}

"The shrine in question is most likely the *Spring of Courage* famously mentioned in the adventures of the hero Link. The location of the spring, as well as that of *Power* and *Wisdom*, is a close secret of the crown.

"However, what interests me again is how Faron is discussed in-text. The holy feminine particle is used not once but four times. Our (well, Egrir's) theory is this is colloquial, an expression of respect for sacred sites and mountains. But this doesn't appear in any other writings from this period, and the ancient word for Faron is not used here. *Farore* is.

"*Farore* appears in pre-classical scripture and maps as another name for the region, derived from mixed dialects. Mostly, however, Farore appears as the name of a legendary spirit, dragon, or deity—depending on the myth.

"Here, I believe Farore refers to a goddess—one of the Golden, from my people's legends."

{Trans. #18}

"After weeks, the [vassals] have finally returned [*Unintelligible*] is frostbitten from her encounter with [Lanayru] [but] she brings news the other two were not as [successful]. I am not surprised.

"[...] scraps of wisdom! Scraps! [Lanayru] is the mouthpiece of the goddess. She speaks, where [Faron] acts and [Eldin] plots. why [*Unintelligible*]? Is this our reward? [Crumbs]?

"There is much dissent at the abbey. I must tend to the archives."

{Supplement #18}

"Felix argues the recurrence of the old names, *Farore*, *Nayru*, and *Din* does not correlate to the Golden Goddesses but the locations of the shrines. However, we've pieced together enough of the pronoun usage to note the difference between a holy name and a holy site. Egrir begrudgingly agrees with me. He grew up on the same stories I did. I saw the look in his eyes as I told the team the story of Lanayru Bay—the night, I saw one of the legendary dragons, Naydra—called Nayru as well, in some stories.

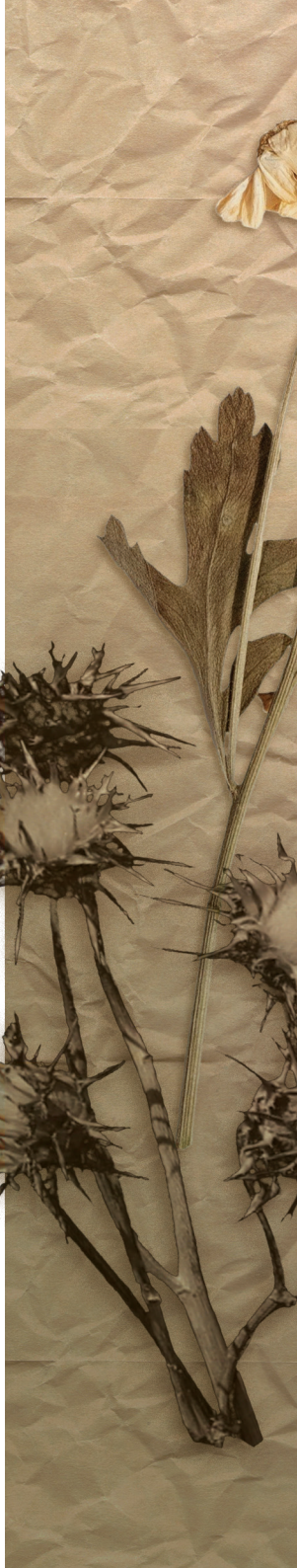
"I was but a child. I had wandered away from my family's hunting troupe late at night. I will never forget its docile, feather-like eyes gazing into mine or its silver skin, passing along the water like snow. Before I knew it, it did begin to snow. When my parents found me, I had blacked out from the cold. I lost two toes to frostbite, as the vassal did. A gift from the gods, perhaps?"

Ah. This was a story Sul told sparingly; you've heard it told only twice. Both times, Sul had a distant look on their face. You might call it fear, but you know better. It was reverence.

You pull away from reading to observe your lab. It's dark out now, and life in the village below is slowing to a close. Outside, you can hear the ancient Sheikah furnace hum. Its flame cascades through the windows and envelops the room in blue light. Like the journal, it is a relic of a past you, Sul, and every other descendant of a fallen world are desperately trying to remember. Whatever Sul's beliefs, their letter was right. Solving mysteries is why you did what you did.

Hereon, Nayru's writings wane. One last transcription remains.

{Trans. #31}
"[...] the abbey grows quieter. Two more sisters have left wisdom must keep if faith is to survive, or so the abbess says. I continue my duties
"The [vassal] of [Lanayru], [Unintelligible], has stayed with us. [We] spoke. She told me the story of the first hero and the descent of Hyrule [lit. 'high country'] from the heavens [lit. 'skyward'].
[*Unintelligible*] regards it with great esteem. [*Unintelligible*], [*Unintelligible*]
"The Triforce [lit. 'the Power'] was entrusted to our goddess [yet] her [begetters] were [absent] during her struggles
[and] the world nearly met its demise [lit. the Gerudo word for 'demon' or 'hell'].
"[*Unintelligible*] tells me to have faith as Hylia did. Her pilgrimage was not without its [trials] [...] I would rather not [compare] myself to a goddess.
"[...] I have lived at the abbey all my life [...] I know little else. What can I do?"



{Supplement #31}

"Begetter. Creator. Mother. All modern interpretations of the base word 'deity' or 'high-on-high'. Again, a term used exclusively when discussing the goddess.

"Both Egrir and Felix are baffled, while I'm brimming with questions. The Triforce has always been part of history, this passage proves as much, but where did it come from? Was it made, or born? And Hylia? A foolishly spiritual question for an academic, but our continued existence after the Calamity is thanks to forces we do not understand.

"Perhaps that is why the crown has agreed to fund my research. Maybe the queen wants to know just as much as I do.

"Whatever came of Nayru, I hope she found her answer too."

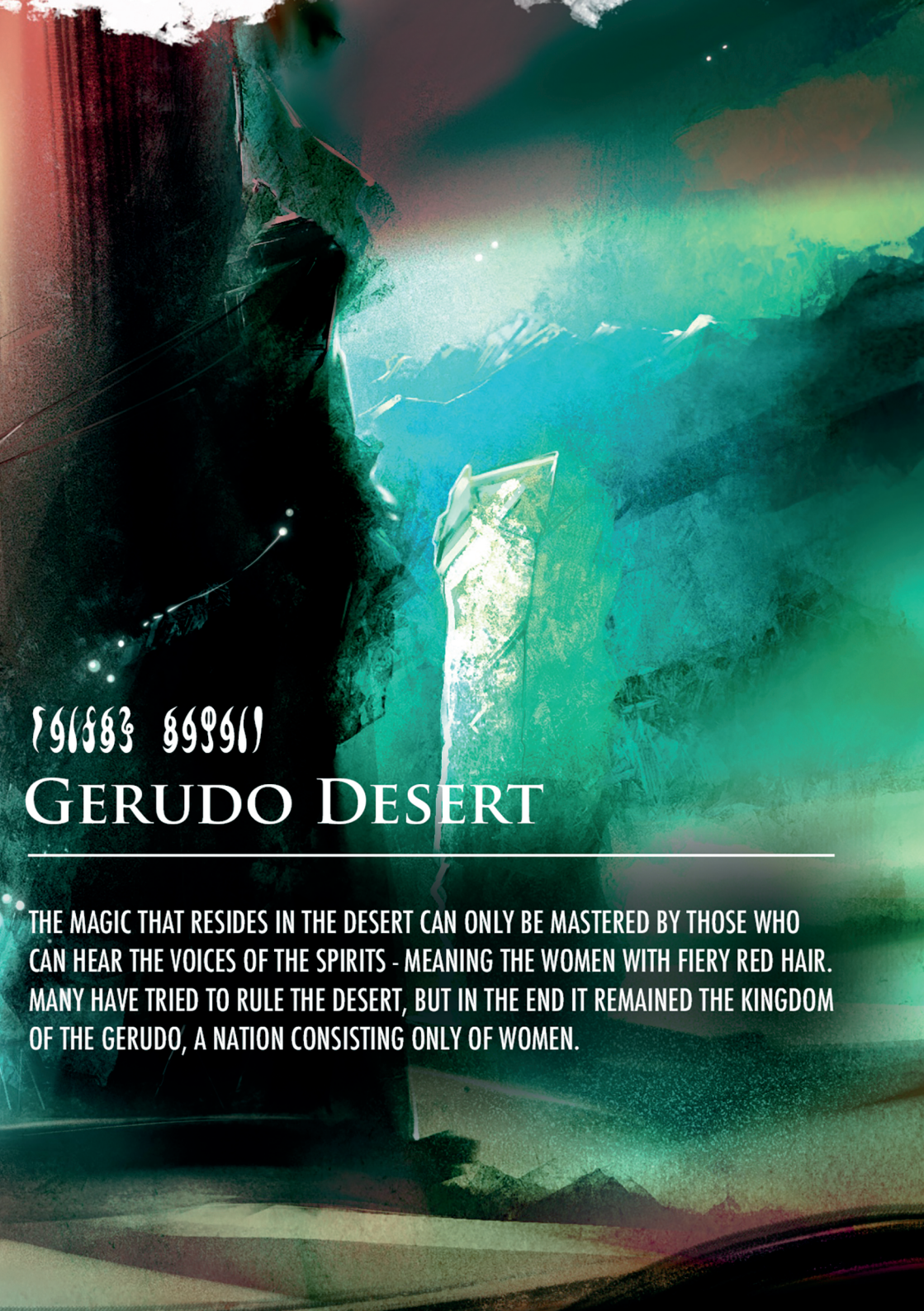
A closing note addressed personally to you, states that the final pages of Nayru's journal have not been recovered due to age and damage. The previous transcriptions are the most recent and most likely the last, yet, somehow, you get the feeling Sul is leading you astray. A delectable carrot, and you, the rabbit.

No matter. You've read enough. It is getting late and there's much to do.

You pull out a map from under a pile of research material. The Great Plateau is some distance away; the lab will need supervision while you are gone.

You begin to pen your response to Sul.

***



Gerudo Desert

THE MAGIC THAT RESIDES IN THE DESERT CAN ONLY BE MASTERED BY THOSE WHO CAN HEAR THE VOICES OF THE SPIRITS - MEANING THE WOMEN WITH FIERY RED HAIR. MANY HAVE TRIED TO RULE THE DESERT, BUT IN THE END IT REMAINED THE KINGDOM OF THE GERUDO, A NATION CONSISTING ONLY OF WOMEN.

Record of the Hyrulean Royal Society for Archaeology's Forgotten Temple Expedition

---

Recorded by Zelda of Hyrule

words by WillfulAbyss

Day 1, Noon

We set out from Hyrule Castle today for our long-awaited expedition to the Forgotten Temple in Tanagar Canyon. Though it has stood for thousands—more probably tens of thousands—of years, I must admit I was surprised to learn it has remained relatively untouched these past hundred years.[1] Father never permitted me to visit these ancient ruins despite their clear connection to the goddess; her statue there is said to be the largest and oldest yet discovered. Further, it has been theorized that the temple was constructed by the ancient sky-people of legend, said to be the first disciples of Hylia. The most compelling evidence supporting this theory is the shared avian iconography with the Lanayru Promenade, which has long been cited as evidence of the existence of the sky-people. I intend to research this connection further.

Presently, we are breaking for lunch just beyond Carok Bridge at the northwestern border of Hyrule Field. We will be passing through the Breach of Demise in short order and taking the southern road into Hyrule Ridge. From there, we will stop off at Rito Village to meet up with our guides to the temple. Oh—I suppose I should mention that "we" is the traveling party of Sheikah researchers, soldiers, Link, and myself that currently constitutes the Royal Society for Archaeology. After one hundred years, the RSA at last makes its revival!

We expect to reach Tabantha Stable by sundown where we will lodge for the night. The stable sits at the precipice of the canyon, but I understand that the temple is still much farther north. I suspect (and pray) that I will be too tired to wallow in my disappointment that I will be unable to glimpse it from there.

We are preparing to get back on the road now. We mustn't tarry if we are to reach Tabantha Stable before nightfall.

Day 2, Evening

After a long day of riding, we have arrived at Rito Village. I am presently swaddled in my cot at the Swallow's Roost. They use moulted Rito down in the comforters, and truly, I've never experienced such softness and warmth! We picked up some warmer clothing made of the same materials for when we venture deeper into the Tabantha and Hebra regions. As it turns out, Rito fashion is both stylish and practical!

Before retiring for the night, we met with the guides who will accompany us on our expedition (all researchers themselves, as it turns out). There are five Rito in their party, and they are led by an anthropologist called Raso. He's a mild-mannered fellow and well-respected in his field. I suspect I will learn much from him and the others.

---

[1] *I have this on good authority from Link, who found himself there through the course of his adventuring. According to him, the temple was rife with decayed Guardians still active after the war, which must have lent itself to quite the misadventure…*

Today, as we rode along Piper Ridge, I was given a terrible fright when we were suddenly set upon by a couple of Guardian Skywatchers. I must admit to giving in to my fears and reining in my poor horse rather severely. But Link, selfless as he always is, rode forth and expertly dispatched the Skywatchers with a blue-tipped arrow that destroyed them on impact. When questioned about it after, he told me that the arrows were specially made anti-Guardian weapons given to him by "a strange old Sheikah scientist." I have a sneaking suspicion that I know who is responsible for the development of this admittedly very impressive technology.

Still, while Link didn't seem at all perturbed by the encounter, I wish he would take more care in regard to his own safety. Perhaps I am being overprotective, but no matter what I do, I simply cannot erase from my memory the sight of him standing between me and a Guardian on that fateful day at Fort Hateno...

Day 3, Night

We are settled at last at Snowfield Stable. I can scarcely keep my eyes open, so I will keep this entry brief.

Nothing much of interest happened on our ride here. We departed from Rito Village before the sun could even climb into the sky and rode until it had long since fallen beyond the horizon. On Raso's advice, we wore our Rito garments to account for the falling temperatures as we made our way north, and I am glad we heeded his warning—Snowfield Stable lives up to its name! Link already had his own Rito clothing, which I suppose only makes sense when he has traveled all over the land in his quest. ~~He looked quite dashing in them.~~

I think I have overestimated my own stamina. It has been so long since I've ridden this much that I'm already nursing saddle sores. My horse, at least, is hardy as can be. Link has tamed him quite well after capturing him near the ruins of Sanidan Park. His temperament is haughty, but he's fiercely loyal. He really does seem to be descended from my dear old friend.

Tonight, I had my first glimpse of the Forgotten Temple! The party was thoroughly worn out by the time we reached Snowfield Stable, and I did not wish to trouble them to indulge my impatience, so I set off for the canyon on my own. I suppose I should have expected this, but Link soon caught up with me and accompanied me the rest of the way. Really, he needn't have! He has already been inside the temple—I doubt a glimpse of its exterior in the pitch black of night was of much interest to him! But he came, and I admit I was grateful for the company. When we reached the canyon's edge, we lifted our lanterns and could barely make out the massive structure below us. And yet I found myself so overcome by excitement that even now, though my body aches and my head is fogged with sleepiness, my heart won't seem to settle.

******

Day 4, Morning

The sun has but scarcely peeked over the rim of the canyon, yet much has already transpired! We woke at dawn, and after a quick breakfast at Snowfield Stable, we made our way on foot and by wing to the edge of Tanagar Canyon. In the dawnlight, the Forgotten Temple was more magnificent than I ever could have conceived of. Though much of it has crumbled away, it remains standing. I have already gathered soil and stone samples from its base to analyze back at the castle. I hope, with the technology we have, that we may be able to date the structure with some accuracy.[2]

Our Rito guides graciously ferried us to the bottom of the canyon. While I was being carried by Raso, I spied the two avian sculptures that flank the temple's entrance. One has suffered the ravages of time more severely, but the other appears beautifully preserved. I am eager to get a closer look at them once the scaffolds have been erected.

That is what we are doing at present—raising the scaffolds. The others insisted that I rest in the shade while they construct them, but I have waited over one hundred years to get my hands dirty like this! It's tedious work, no doubt, but I find myself satisfied with my contribution to it all the same. There are bonds of camaraderie forming between us—Sheikah, soldiers, Rito, Link, and I—and it is the most fulfilled I have felt perhaps in all my life. There are no titles or ranks between us here—we are all colleagues in archaeology.

Or as much as we can be, I suppose. They've let me take a rest while they continue the work. I only obliged them on the condition that any who require rest take some as well. They still call me "princess" when I assert that "just Zelda" is fine, but I understand that tradition is difficult to break from. At least Link seems a little more relaxed around me.

He opted to rest as well, though not for his own sake. He still sees himself as my appointed knight, ever-vigilant with regard to my safety, though he can't recall much of his life from that time. When I came to rest on this rock, he knelt before me, but I urged him to rise and sit beside me instead. That seemed to relieve him a little—quite a marked change from his rigidity one hundred years ago!

He appears to be distracted at present—very unbecoming for a knight, and I wholeheartedly approve. He takes interest in everything, or so it seems: the rock beneath us, the lizard scurrying over it, the thin clouds veiling the sun above. There's a certain joie de vivre in his mannerisms that is so foreign to me and so unlike how he once was. I wonder if his amnesia has been a blessing to him in some way—the lifting of a burden he never should have borne.

---

[2] *I suspect it is older than most of the ancient edifices scattered throughout Hyrule and her neighboring provinces. The architectural style does not line up with any with which I am familiar. It is most similar to (though still distinct from) the Temple of Time on the Great Plateau. I shall attempt to conduct further analyses between the two, though history has been grievously disadvantaged by the Temple of Time's desecration by the Calamity.*

Oh! He's looking at me now! Perhaps I've taken too long of a break? I should get back to work. Oh... There was a beetle in my hair, and he plucked it out for me.

It's still cool down in the canyon, so why do I suddenly feel so warm?

Day 4, Night

I can't recall ever feeling so sore in my entire life. My feet hurt, my shoulders are stiff, and my wrists ache, but lying here in my tent within the most impressive ruin I have ever laid eyes upon gives me such a grand sense of satisfaction and purpose that my physical ailments feel almost sweet in their occurrence—as if they were medals awarded to me for the work I have accomplished here. It sounds foolish, I admit. Erecting scaffolding is not a particularly noteworthy achievement (though it ought to be), and yet I feel as if I have already contributed to the furtherance of our scholarship here. The excitement of it all must be getting to me.

The entrance to the temple is located on its second story. It is through here that we entered via the scaffolds. Link and the Sheikah were the first inside to ensure the structural integrity as well as confirm that all of the Guardians were indeed deactivated.[3] When I was at last permitted entry, I was awestruck by the sheer scale of that first hall. It is simply cavernous, the ceiling vaulting high overhead even as the ground floor remained perilously far below us. What appeared to have once been a system of bridges and staircases for navigating the chamber is now largely destroyed, leaving the second hall inaccessible to us. According to Link, the goddess statue resides within this second hall, and so we must wait until the catwalks are completed before we can access it. The anticipation truly is maddening!

Today, Raso kindly lowered me to the ground floor, and Link and I set planks across the gaps in the flooring. It is the strangest thing, but there are powerful wind vents jetting up from the earth where the floor has split apart. I intend to investigate them at a later date. ~~Rather embarrassingly, Link insisted on taking my hand each time we crossed to ensure that I didn't lose my footing.~~

I spent the remainder of the day exploring the areas within reach while the Sheikah and soldiers continued work on the scaffolding. What a process it all is! I examined the reliefs displayed prominently on some of the pillars. Some represent the bird creatures, but many feature geometric patterns of an unknown configuration; I can link them to no symbols I've encountered in any other ruins I've visited or read about. Perhaps they're merely meant to be decorative—the arrangement of shapes *is* pleasing to the eye. Or perhaps there's some deeper meaning in their design that is lost to us. I've sketched them to the best of my ability so that I may cross-reference them with my library when I return home. (I am thankful that a good many volumes managed to

[3] *They were—and it was a bit of a shame to see how Link did quite a number on them last he was here, for I would have liked to have examined their functionality. Of course, I would much rather no harm come to him, and so I must conclude that their utter destruction is for the best!*

survive the Calamity.)

We set up our tents within the temple to avoid the intense winds that rush through the canyon at night. I can hear them now—an eerie chorus like the wailing of lost souls. I know it's just the wind, but hearing it here, in this place where so many once lived and worked and died, is rather unsettling. ~~Link's tent is set up beside mine. If anything were to happen~~

For dinner, Link cooked a great repast for everyone. I was shocked to see him do it. While he has always had quite the appetite (and that holds true even now), I did not know him to be a chef himself. But he sat at the fire with a large pan and cooked delectable meat and mushroom skewers, fresh wild greens, and even honeyed apples for dessert. While the food was unquestionably delicious, I was more pleased to see how lively he was while preparing it! The Link that I knew one hundred years ago rarely indulged in personal pleasures. He was duty-bound in the most literal meaning of the term, unwilling and perhaps unable to partake in any manner of hobby or leisure pursuit. But tonight, he smiled as he cooked and even made a sort of performance out of it! He looked so happy that it nearly moved me to tears.

Day 5, Evening

While work continues on the catwalk, I thought it would be prudent to take a closer look at the carvings outside the temple. Link accompanied me, and we spent the morning and the better part of the afternoon outside under the sweltering sun. (Thank the goddess I remembered to pack my sun hat!)

The bird carvings truly are mystifying. With their large beaks and distinctive three-feather crests, these creatures do not appear to be represented in any of the records of ancient fauna that I have encountered. I will have to consult my library again as well as Impa, who knows much more than I on the subject of Hyrule's storied history.

There are tales I have stumbled upon in undated documents that tell of humanity's earliest days spent not here on the earth but up in the vast skies. According to these texts, the Hylian race is descended from these early sky-people, who were sent by the goddess to live in safety above the clouds while She joined those who remained below to fight against demonic forces. Eons later, a calamity brought the sky-dwellers down from their lofty heights, and so began their habitation here on the surface. I know not what that calamity entailed—it is only briefly referenced in the stories—but it left the sky-people forever grounded thereafter.

I suppose the idea of living in the skies *is* rather absurd. But if it were true, then these great birds might very well have lived amongst the people of that age. I have considered that they might have been deities of some sort, worshipped in their own time. But their positioning here as sentinels of this temple leads me to believe otherwise. While these creatures certainly appear to have been revered by the temple's architects, I think they may have served more as protectors of deities than deities themselves. After all, here

they remain, guarding their goddess even after all this time.

As I was sketching the statue to the left of the temple entrance, Raso approached me to offer his own thoughts with regard to the creatures. He informed me of the prevailing theory amongst his people—that these birds are actually the ancestors of the Rito! I had not considered such a possibility before, but he was quite compelling when he spoke at length about the physiological similarities observed in these statues and the recorded descriptions of the earliest known Rito people. Moreover, he suggested that these legendary birds were the sworn companions of the sky-people, serving as protectors and even transportation between the many islands in the sky. Such would explain, he continued, the apparent disappearance of the birds to history; in order to adapt to the confines of the surface world, the birds evolved to take on a more compact size, eventually becoming the people we now know as the Rito. I admit, I'm rather fond of this theory. To think that our peoples may have shared such an intimate bond of trust for so many millennia!

Around noon, Link provided me with a hearty stew he had prepared this morning. I hadn't asked him to, and I felt guilty that while I slept in, he woke early to make it for me. But he seemed quite sincere when he presented it to me—and looked overjoyed when I told him how delicious it was. I wish he wouldn't spoil me like this and would just treat me as any other, but when I told him that, he appeared to think I was scolding him. I won't lie—I couldn't help but chuckle at that. Whether he recalls it or not, it is so very "Link" of him to take these sorts of things so quickly to heart! I assured him that I greatly appreciated his care of me but insisted that tomorrow, it will be I who cooks the meal for everyone. I want to thank him for all that he has done—goddess knows I've scarcely conveyed as much up until now.

When I finished my sketches this afternoon, I reentered the temple to find the catwalk nearly completed. I offered my assistance until we at last broke for dinner. I will have to think of what I will make for everyone tomorrow...

Day 6, Night

The catwalk was completed early this morning as I slept. To think that I have grown so accustomed in such a short time to the chorus of hammers and saws that I didn't even wake till the sun poured into the hall! I dressed and ate quickly, then climbed the scaffolding up to the second story. Link, of course, followed behind me and insisted on guiding me across the catwalk as well, though it was not nearly so narrow as the makeshift bridges we made below. There is an enormous hole in the far wall which looks to have been created by a Guardian's laser. Oddly, it is the only access into the second hall that I could discern.[4] When I stepped through it, I was greeted by the face of the goddess Hylia herself, cast in stone in breathtaking detail. The craftsmanship truly is extraordinary. Carved out of fine limestone, the statue has stood for untold years,

[4] *I wonder if there might have once been a hidden door and if the statue were deliberately concealed beyond it in order to protect it from the wrath of nonbelievers?*

ステンドグラスの窓
教会の内部
ゴシック様式
石造りの建物

ステンドグラスの窓
教会の内部
ゴシック様式
石造りの建物

ステンドグラスの窓
教会の内部
ゴシック様式
石造りの建物

watching over these hallowed halls. Even after everything, I felt a fervent piousness stir within me on perceiving it. ~~Perhaps if I had beheld her like this one hundred years ago, I might have…~~

We set up our tents within the temple to avoid the intense winds that rush through the canyon at night. I can hear them now—an eerie chorus like the wailing of lost souls. I know it's just the wind, but hearing it here, in this place where so many once lived and worked and died, is rather unsettling. ~~Link's tent is set up beside mine. If anything were to happen~~

If this temple was indeed erected by the sky-people, then it's possible this statue, too, fell from the sky—a surviving relic, meticulously repaired. I have collected some stone samples that have broken off and will analyze them for any abnormalities. The presence of Guardians suggests that the temple was still in use at least throughout the era in which Hylia worship fell out of favor with the people.[5] In fact, I posit that it was not forsaken entirely until more recently. The Guardians may offer some clues in that regard—I shall examine what remains of them in more detail tomorrow.

As promised, I ended my research early this afternoon in order to prepare dinner. I made mushroom sauté with a side of Hylian rice along with fried bananas for dessert. It was a laborious task, cooking for so many, but I'm quite pleased with how it all came out. When I asked Link what he thought of it, he told me, in that quiet way of his, that it was delicious. I hope he isn't just saying that for the sake of my feelings!

Day 7, Night

I had a look at the Guardians today.

Mechanically, they are indistinguishable from the standard model with which I am intimately familiar. I disassembled the most intact model I could find. While the outer shell sustained heavy damage from Link's blade, only the core was destroyed on the inside. The rest of the parts were mottled in rust but otherwise fully operational. The durability of Sheikah technology never ceases to amaze me.

These Guardians, too, were most likely affected by the Calamity, reactivated after a long dormancy. I suspect that they were initially placed here ten thousand years ago in order to protect the temple. Were they intended to defend worshippers against their persecutors? And yet while the Guardians have remained, ever-vigilant, the people fled, and the temple collapsed around these ancient protectors.

The Guardians here are limbless. The organic material used in the construction of the limbs is often the first part of a Guardian to decay, so that isn't unusual. And yet I can't

5 While the royal family has always maintained its faith in Hylia, in tumultuous times during which the Sheikah and their culture were feared and reviled by the common folk, worship of the goddess faced a decline and even persecution. The people instead placed their faith in the old gods who created our world, the three golden goddesses Din, Nayru, and Farore.

help but wonder if some manner of violence took place here. Some of the damage done to the temple does not appear natural… Perhaps I am overthinking things. It is possible that the Guardians were damaged by thieves and scavengers long after the temple was abandoned.

I think I have remained here too long with the ghosts of the past. I should get some sleep.

Day 8, Noon

It is only noon, yet I am already abuzz with questions and theories! Today, I descended to the pits of the temple to examine the air vents. What strange phenomena they are! I initially suspected that they were volcanic vents originating from deep below the surface. But while the air they emit is warm, it is not scorching hot. Link is able to ride them on his glider, as he's demonstrated countless times. It truly is a geological mystery.

I wonder if the sky-people knew of these vents when they built their temple here. Perhaps the vents are why they chose to build their temple in such a difficult to access location to begin with. Either way, the vents were almost assuredly used or intended to be used by them. The pits from which they issue have been deliberately dug from the earth beneath what was originally the temple's ground floor. While the vents aren't terribly powerful now, I wonder if such was the case millennia ago. Did the sky-people intend to propel their temple back to the land above the clouds, desperate to return to their home in the sky? If so, the plan never got off the ground, so to speak. The temple was simply too heavy, and the vents were not powerful enough to lift such an impressive edifice skyward. I would love to excavate the vents to see where they lead, but I fear doing so would destabilize the entire temple.

Alas, my time here is coming to an end. Tomorrow is my last day of research, and so I will examine the statue again in earnest. Perhaps there is something I missed. Perhaps there is more that can be gleaned from that depiction of the goddess.

Day 9, Afternoon

I did something so unbelievably foolish today, and if it weren't for Link, I would not be writing this now. Yet I cannot regret my actions, for out of my foolishness, something incredible happened.

As planned, I began my morning at the goddess statue and had a look through the shrine at her feet. According to Link, it is called the Rona Kachta Shrine, and, as with all the others, the name simply appeared in his head upon entering. There is nothing unique about this shrine compared to most of the others, however, so I did not stay for long.

Link accompanied me again today, as he is wont to do. In truth, I don't think he shares

my passion for ancient ruins and so follows me for lack of anything else to do when he isn't cooking. Oh—I don't mean to suggest that he is not concerned for my safety. Without a doubt, he is still very much tied to his duty from one hundred years ago, though I have frequently urged him to dispense of it. But I will not dictate his choices, and his decision to follow me still is his to make. And though he is quiet, I can't say that I don't appreciate his company. Even if it's just me talking at him, his presence is comforting.

In any case, I am grateful beyond words that he was with me. I have been warned, countless times, to take care when navigating the catwalks. And yet in my excitement today, I threw all caution to the wind. How absurdly foolish I was, eschewing a researcher's most important principle to always be aware of one's surroundings. I climbed to the top of the statue without issue, but once I was there atop the goddess's great head, I lost all sense of perspective. Link followed me up, of course, and if he hadn't, I shudder to think of what would have become of me.

As can surely be concluded, I misstepped and sent myself plummeting from that great height. Or I would have, had Link not grabbed my hand and pulled me back up. But for that split second when the terror of falling filled me, I am absolutely certain that I saw something—a vision. I know this must sound unbelievable, but I truly believe I saw the fabled land of the sky-people! I am certain I did not imagine it. No, even in my wildest reckonings, I could not have imagined it in such detail. It was a colorful, fertile land, and the sun shone brightly upon it. The guardian birds were there—two of them, crimson- and violet-feathered, respectively. These creatures stood over their masters beneath a towering goddess statue—without a doubt this very statue. But most unsettling to me were the two individuals.

It was a young woman and a young man. At first, I took the young woman for Hylia herself. But something about that did not seem quite right. I think… I think she may have been *me*. The resemblance was uncanny. She had the same eyes, the same hair, the same face and frame… I only saw her for a moment, and yet I cannot shake her image from my head. And further, the young man beside her was *Link*. That is unmistakable—I would recognize him anywhere. He was attired all in green. I have seen that garb before, of course—it is the garb of the ancient hero. I have seen it many times in books and old reliefs. But I've also seen it much more recently—on Link himself. He told me he discovered it here, within the Forgotten Temple. A Sheikah monk told him to come here once he completed all of his trials. This cannot be a coincidence.

I know not what this vision means. Was it a glimpse into the long-distant past—a past so old it has been relegated to mere legend that even the books have largely forgotten? Did the goddess intend for me to see this? For what purpose? Was this preordained? Have Link and I met before—as different people but with the same souls? As sky-people? Have we met other times as well? I don't know what to make of it—it is too metaphysical for me to consider in my present condition, and so I thought to record it straightaway.

My heart is still pounding. Link pulled me to safety atop the statue. He did not let go of my hand until we had safely descended. His face is still pale—I think I gave him

quite the shock. That makes two of us. I don't think anyone else was around to witness it, thankfully. The last thing I need is to worry the others.

Overall, I think this has been quite the successful expedition. I have much to research and consider once I return to the castle. I am all too eager to delve into the legends of the sky-people again. As for the guardian bird statues, I think I will have Link chaperone me to the Lanayru Promenade in short order to compare and take notes. And… I think I ought to tell him about my vision. If anyone were to believe me, it would be him.

Link and I depart for Snowfield Stable tonight alongside some of the Rito and soldiers. The rest of the RSA will continue their research for some time; I hope to make it back here once I have better laid out some of my theories. I have already promised Raso to keep in touch—his research is parallel to my own, and it would benefit the both of us, I think, to exchange notes.

Thus, after a momentous nine days, do I conclude this research record.

Addendum: Two Weeks Later, Afternoon

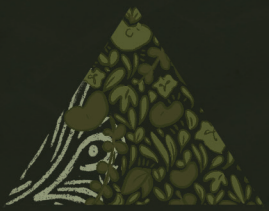
I could not remain at the castle for long before setting out again. And so Link and I are at Lanayru Promenade for the day.

As soon as I returned to the castle, I set off for Kakariko Village. Impa and I had a long conversation about the sky-people. She does not know much more than the history texts; however, she is certain that the island in the sky did indeed exist. This history, she told me, has been passed down through oral tradition in the Sheikah tribe since time immemorial. When I told her of my vision, she was inclined to believe me. As the closest mortal to the goddess, she said, it is likely that what I saw was indeed a message of some sort from Hylia. I still don't know what to make of it.

Now, I am sketching the promenade, as I have done before. But I think this time, I will add some touches of my own, inspired by what I saw that day at the goddess statue. Perhaps I can recreate how the island in the sky and those beautiful birds might have looked…

I will end this journal by including my final drawing in the hopes that I can return to it someday with a true representation of that mythical place.

ISBN 978-1-4197-3555-1
Library of Congress Control Number: 2019933111
Text copyright © 2019 Jason Reynolds
Illustrations copyright © 2019 Jason Griffin
Book design by Chad W. Beckerman
Published in 2019 by Abrams Books for Young Readers
An imprint of ABRAMS
All rights reserved. No portion of this book may be reproduced or utilized in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or by any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publisher.
Printed and bound in China
10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1
Abrams Books for Young Readers
195 Broadway
New York, NY 10007
abramsbooks.com



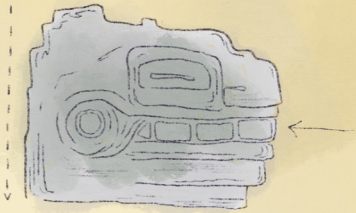
Those who Raise(d)

A report on the Zonai Ruins

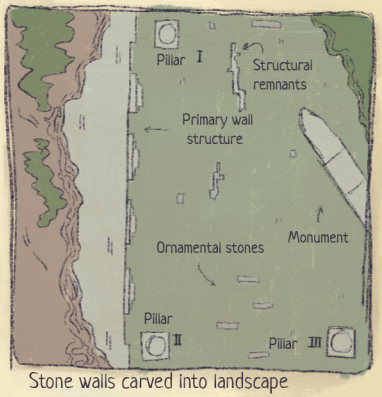
Further research and excavations recommended

Map of the region

The methods used in these dragon carvings are unlike any Hylian and Sheikah stone architecture...

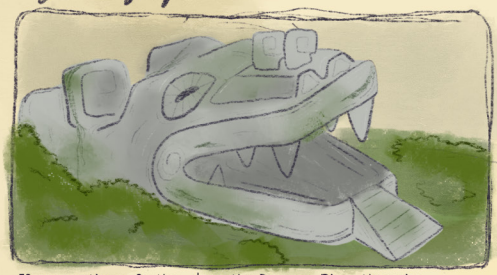


Similar to stone carvings found in the Lomei Labyrinths, but the slight technical and stylistic differences indicate these predate the Lomei finds.



Stone walls carved into landscape

A ruins complex located in the Faron region, the site seems to have been both a settlement and a place of religious significance for the Zonai



If one continues further down the Dracozu River, the ruins expand onwards and end with a mysterious temple carved in the image of the serpentine creature often depicted in Zonai art.

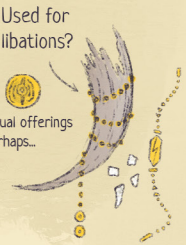
The pillars are decorated with a geometric serpent design, in structure they are far more robust than any ancient Hylian order pillars.

Dragon sightings in the Faron region; eyewitness descriptions match up with Zonai depictions.

Unearthed artifacts:

The scale of an unknown serpent-like creature

Used for libations?



The Zonai Culture: An Archaeological Study

E. Kusti

I preface the following article with this: the topic of the Zonai may be considered taboo by some. However, dear reader, open your mind as you engage with this information. For this is a report of a once thriving, ingenious people, and I consider it my goal to stamp out the blatantly dirty rumors of a savage, animalistic culture.

Core Symbols and Stylistic Elements of the Zonai

Our first question is exactly what makes an archaeological site Zonai, and how can we tell? For the answer, I will turn your attention to the left image; the curious site of the Dragon's Mouth and the winding Serpent's Trail that leads to it.

If one traverses the path, they might notice it is flanked on both sides by natural rock walls and countless busts of grinning dragons that rise far above their heads. Each is hewn from the surrounding cliff, divided into several pieces, and reconfigured to form pillars that mark a clear pathway for pilgrims to follow. Important features of each pillar are as follows: one long pointed tooth at the rear of a mouthful of rectangular teeth, a prominent nose with large nostrils, a crooked horn, and a slitted pupil within the eye.

While dragons are the predominant focus of Zonai stonemasons, they are not the only animal of interest. Stylized images of owls and boars are elegantly carved into massive blocks of stone.

One may find owls perched on mountain tops and before crumbled structures or temple ruins (notably, the Thyphlo site is saturated with them), often with small seagull pedestals for offerings at their feet. Oddly, they are the only statue to be outfitted with specific decor for worship.

Boar statues, on the other hand, are usually found alongside well-used trackways. Though this is not always the case;

several have been discovered deep within the jungle, partially buried. On the rear of each statue can be found a traditional mark of the Zonai also found upon the Thundra Plateau. There are three other such markings upon said plateau that are not currently linked to other sites.

The dragon is symbolic of godliness and holy sites, the electrical power from the heavens, and perhaps even tests of courage, yet owls and boars within Zonai culture remain more ambiguous.

Labyrinths of Lomei Compared to Other Structures

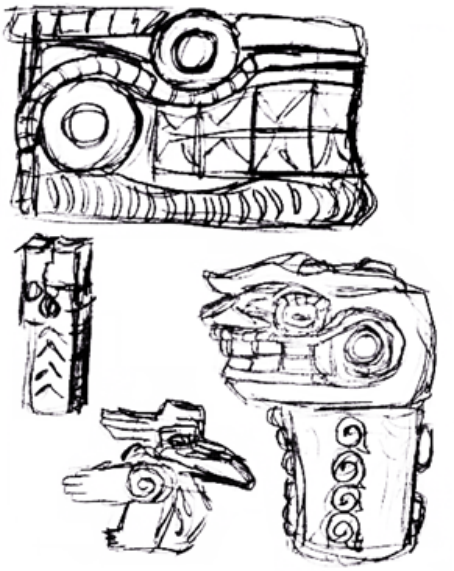
To the unaware, the Lomei labyrinths are a series of three highly sophisticated, gargantuan structures built with the intention of presenting a challenge to those whom it may concern. Each location is set far from most civilizations in nearly inaccessible places. Amidst the sands of the Gerudo desert, the unruly waves of northern Akkala's ocean, and the deep tundra of Hebra all house a labyrinth of their own. Only the truly dedicated—or foolish—will seek them out.

Upon first glance, one with a vague familiarity of the Zonai artistic style may notice some similarities; most notably, the use of a dragon motif. The heads of dragons can be found guarding the entrance of each labyrinth, stacked upon each other as they ascend into the sky. They all have prominent eyes, thick red lips, and flat teeth which hint at Zonai influence. However! I implore you to look a second time. These buildings are not, in fact, Zonai creations.

Comparing these images displays a stark contrast in style; simply put, these two carvings do not come from the same source. Rather, the engravings present at the Lomei sites are copycats made either in reflection of or in honor of the Zonai by the legendary ancestors of the Sheikah tribe.

Evidence beyond the carvings themselves exists as well. In another well known Zonai structure, the Thyphlo Ruins, I happened upon a slew of intricately carved stone statuettes in the form of birds (perhaps related to the owl statues also found scattered around said site). These figures are both stylistic and functional in nature; basins in the head of the

birds are filled with a flammable substance and are working torches even ten thousand years later. However, these torches are not found illuminating the Lomei labyrinths. Rather, there are rectangular lights in the shape of dragons that provide light, however it is unclear how they self-sustainably glow. It is important to note that only one other culture is known to have achieved such a feat.



There is also the interesting detail that many Zonai sites come coupled with Sheikah Shrines. We can be certain these were placed after the disappearance of the Zonai civilisation, as they are located on or within specific structures, or are connected intimately with the ancient puzzles crafted by the Zonai.

Thundra Plateau features a shrine in its epicenter and the Thyphlo Ruins shrine can be found after one passes through the dark labyrinth, atop what may have been a ceremonial altar. Another site, tied intimately with the legendary Farosh which I suspect is Zonai in origin, features a shrine at its feet.

Why, you might ask, would the Sheikah seek out these particular locations? For those unaware, the elusive Sheikah tribe of the past was notorious for their insistence on creating tests of wit, strength, and ingenuity. Though I have not been able to confirm what, exactly, is contained within each shrine, I hypothesize that this is also the case. The Zonai appear to have been equally as interested; that is to say, they crafted their own trials.

The Trials of Courage

Without proper written records, it can be difficult to glean any sizable information about the religion of the Zonai. What scraps we do know—from fragmentary primary sources and the

late-surviving language of Lurelinians, likely derived from a common ancestor of the ancient Zonai tongue—add almost nothing to this information. Despite this, there are some values evident from the ruins alone; their dedication to their warrior class, devotion to their patron deity, and belief in the divinity of the brave.

Thundra Plateau, Thyphlo Ruins, and two sites known by their Sheikah names (Qukah Nata and Keeha Yoog), though spread far apart and diverse in construction, all have one thing in common: they are designed to challenge those who come upon them. Three of them feature electricity in some shape or form—or so I have come to theorize. Thundra is plagued by eternal storm clouds, a whimsical tale of Qukah Nata tells of a lightning strike to stone, and another is engraved with symbolic lightning bolts upon a tall mountain range frequented, it is said, by Farosh. Thyphlo is the outlier among these, a maze shrouded in eternal, prevailing darkness, yet still demands a similar trait of its challengers: abundant courage.

To solve each puzzle one must stand firm against the elements, harness the wild, unruly powers of nature itself, and suppress the instinctive need to flee in the face of the unknown. Each trial is dangerous beyond belief and it is almost unfathomable that there might have been those defiant enough to face them.

What may have laid at the end of each trial is unknown, perhaps forever lost to time. I myself have considered the possibility that a participant in these life-risking games collected the four sacred spheres now present utop Thundra Plateau (the symbols of which are pictured left) from each designated spot in order to unlock a final reward for their feat. Mind you, this is merely an educated guess. Perhaps the reward may have been purely symbolic; the glory of conquering what to others would be impossible might, indeed, be enough to spur plenty into action.

Present Day Misinterpretations

Though the structures designed and constructed by the Zonai stood the test of time, those who envisioned these marvelous

buildings, sadly, have not. Where these incredible people have gone to and the circumstances of their vanishing remains one of the greatest mysteries of our time. Hyrule's long, complicated story manages to elude even the most dedicated at every point. As is often said, history is written by the victorious.

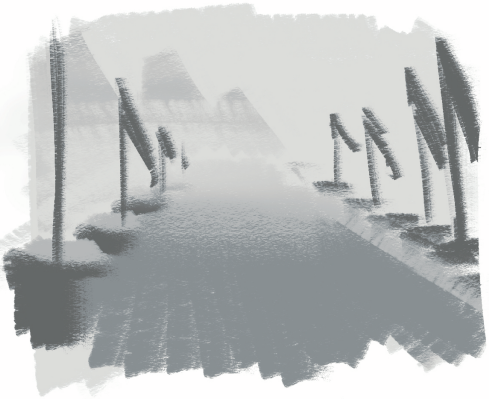
The various peoples of today's world speak only of the Zonai in whispers, and only retell morbid tales of fierce, bloodthirsty warriors, adorned in war paint and loincloths, brandishing spears. Countless tall tales have been spun claiming them to be hellish necromancers or warmongering monsters, little more than wizzrobes and moblins in the skins of men. To be frank, even uttering these words disgusts me. Their simple garb was designed for the hot, humid environment around them and clearly has much still to be deciphered in the way of symbolic meaning. Their courageous endeavors and marvels of construction are lost to time; only scholars and those native to the Faron region seem privy to this information.

Detecting magic, especially old, forgotten magic lost to the sands of time, is difficult. Nor does it happen to be something I am well-versed in. The truth of their abilities as magic-users remains to be seen. I have faith, however, that if this were indeed the case, they were no doubt highly sophisticated in their methods. Faron holds tight its secrets for the time being.

I maintain the hope that there is only more to be discovered in future expeditions. Each and every site brings with it the possibility of uncovering new, unknown details of this long-gone (but never truly forgotten) people of the jungle.

ROYAL COLLEGE OF ARCHAEOLOGY OF HYRULE
603.

WORDS BY FEN



A Noble Pursuit

words by Kathryn

This wasn't the first time Rhondson had set off on a husband hunt.

It was late summer, almost a year after the ghost of the Great Calamity vanished from the castle. Most of Hyrule was still green, but the first touches of red and gold had already begun to appear on the trees of Akkala. It was chilly when Rhondson left Tarrey Town, but the morning fog had lifted and the sky was crystal clear.

Rhondson had always enjoyed mornings. Most people woke up early in the desert and took a nap during the worst heat of the afternoon so that they could stay up late into the evening. Rhondson kept the same schedule in Tarrey Town, a practice that Hudson found inexplicably upsetting. He complained, almost every day now, that she never went to bed with him. He insisted that a man and his wife should fall asleep together. Rhondson explained that she enjoyed sewing by lamplight at night, when the world is quiet and even the plainest thread shines like gold, but he refused to understand.

Hudson had recently grown restless. Perhaps it was because of the tension in their relationship, or perhaps it was only the change of season, but he left Tarrey Town one afternoon and never returned. Ashai's classes hadn't prepared Rhondson for this. They'd talked so much about how to catch a man, but never about how to keep him. She wondered if other vai had the same problem. All of the romances she read when she was younger ended with a "happily ever after," but what was supposed to happen the next day? And the day after that?

All things considered, Rhondson was content with her life in Tarrey Town. Her feelings about the settlement had been ambiguous at first. The location was out-of-the-way, to say the least, but the town received more visitors than she'd expected. The son of the two Sheikah researchers who lived in an old lighthouse up on the northern cliffs made his living as a traveling merchant of fine clothing, and he saw to it that Rhondson always had work. Tarrey Town was unique in its appeal as a marketplace for goods from all over Hyrule, and Hudson's brightly painted modular houses had become something

of a tourist attraction. He'd been flooded with orders for summer rental homes, and a satellite community had sprung up on the other side of the bridge to satisfy the demand.

Hudson managed to keep himself busy, but he seemed to harbor doubts about establishing Tarrey Town on such a small island. To make matters worse, many of the people who'd come to town for the summer were starting to drift away as the days became shorter. Perhaps they were worried about Akkala's infamous autumn thunderstorms. Rhondson happened to enjoy the heavy rains, whose gale winds and lightning crashes reminded her of the sandstorms back home, but she understood how the violent weather and sudden drop in temperature might put off people who weren't accustomed to the climate. She'd camped at more than a few oasis waystations during her travels, and she knew it was perfectly natural for the population of a place like Tarrey Town to wax and wane with the season.

Rhondson tried to explain to Hudson how it was normal for people to come and go. Many of the town residents were nomadic by nature, she said, and they had no excuse not to indulge their wanderlust now that it was safe to travel. Hudson adamantly refused to listen. He insisted that a man's home was his castle. But why not have two castles, Rhondson objected. And people would come back next summer, she reasoned. They'd had to hire new workers to perform upkeep on the vacation homes during the winter, after all, so it wasn't as though the population was shrinking. If he was feeling ambitious, she added with a wink, they might be able to add their own contribution to the town's population.

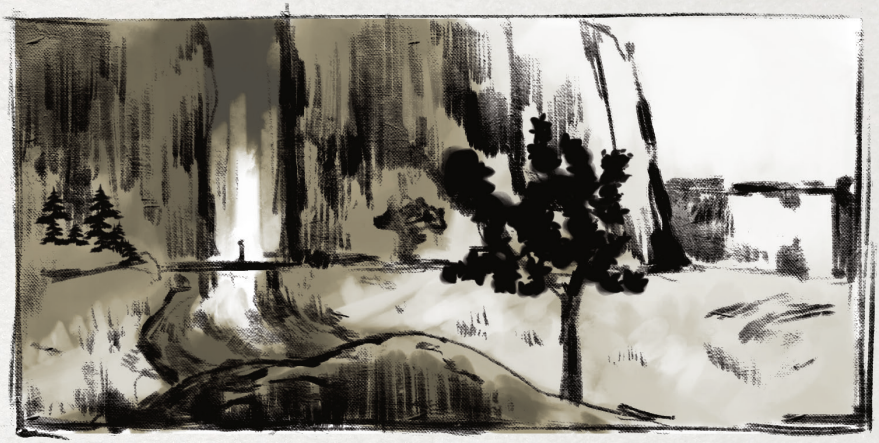
"I'm just not sure how long this town will last," Hudson replied, ending the conversation with a sigh.

His admission put Rhondson ill at ease, and she couldn't help recalling Hudson's anxiety when she realized that he hadn't come home during the night. "Sometimes you have to treat voe like children," Ashai had once explained. "There will be times when they take action without thinking about how it will affect you, but it's likely that their behavior comes from simple thoughtlessness, not spite." Rhondson didn't know about that. She'd met enough silly and immature vai in her life to understand that voe didn't have a monopoly on being pigheaded. Still, if Hudson had gone out and gotten himself lost, purposefully or otherwise, she might as well go find him.

Rhondson set out from Tarrey Town and walked due south, pacing herself as she made her way up the gentle slope of the hills leading to Upland Zorana. Once the mountains began in earnest, she turned west at the road leading to the old stone quarry and kept going until she could see the waterfalls at the source of Lake Akkala.

She'd crossed the Sokkala Bridges when she first came to Tarrey Town instead of taking the longer road to the north, and she was just as impressed by them now as she was then. The log bridges were simple structures, really, not much more than planks laid over support pillars embedded in the banks of the rivulets flowing from the waterfall basin, but they were sturdy and well-constructed. A traveler could cross them with ease, secure enough in their footing to look up and appreciate the rainbows that danced in the misty spray of the waterfalls.

Not every bridge needed to be the Bridge of Hylia, Rhondson thought. Perhaps it was better if most bridges weren't, in fact. The Bridge of Hylia was a magnificent piece of work, to be sure, but it seemed as though it was already in a state of disrepair even before the Great Calamity. Judging from the conversations between Hudson and his former boss Bolson, no living stonemason had any idea how to repair its gargantuan supports. Meanwhile, more modest structures like the Sokkala Bridges could be maintained whenever the need arose. In their own way, the Sokkala Bridges were just as important at the Bridge of Hylia, even if they never became monuments.



As she crossed the final bridge, Rhondson could see the hazy outline of Akkala Citadel rising in the west. Its massive size was impressive, but she couldn't imagine it being particularly beneficial to anyone. Truth be told, the ruins weren't much more than a glorified pile of old stone bricks that could almost certainly be put to better use elsewhere. Speaking of which, Rhondson was starting to get an inkling of where Hudson might have gotten himself off to. "A man's home is his castle," he liked to say, and how intriguing it must have been to have an actual castle so close to home, especially if its materials could be repurposed.

Rhondson headed north when the road forked and made her way across the old high bridge over the river, carefully navigating the deep fissures in the stone. Once she was safely on the other side, she began climbing the winding path up the mountain.

The leaves of the trees on the upper slopes of the hill had already turned a bold shade of crimson, and the weathered steel of the Sheikah Tower gleamed in the sun. Rumor had it that the citadel used to be patrolled by Guardians, but nothing confronted Rhondson save for a few moss-covered remnants of ceramic casing. Parts of the road had been washed away in a landslide, probably after the Malice swamp dried up, but the majority of the paving stones were still intact.

Rhondson entered the gatehouse at the foot of the outer wall surrounding the citadel.

The inside was littered with rubble from a century-old battle, and the remains of more recent Bokoblin campfires were scattered across the floor. A partially overturned Guardian occupied a corner of the room, its segmented legs folded neatly underneath its casing like the paws of a sleeping cat. When she first set out from the desert, Rhondson had been terrified of encountering a Guardian, but she'd grown fond of the broken bits and pieces of their chassis that had been left beside Hyrule's roads to remind travelers to remain vigilant. Their round faces and decoratively textured bodies were actually a bit cute, like oversized toys.

Rhondson passed through the gatehouse and entered a small courtyard. The walls of the citadel rose on every side of the open space, but the gaps between turrets were wide enough for the sun to shine through and warm the paving stones. One side of the courtyard was dominated by a large alcove that was probably used to shelter horses. The bare soil under the dilapidated wooden awning was covered in pale green scrub bush and dotted with bright yellow wildflowers.

A covered walkway ran along the opposite wall, connecting the gatehouse to the larger body of the citadel. As Rhondson followed the shaded path, she imagined how heavily the snowfall would accumulate at this altitude. She didn't envy the soldiers tasked with shoveling duty. She glanced at the enormous wooden door that marked the entrance to the main hall, but its iron fittings were orange with rust. Thankfully, the smaller door at the end of the walkway was barely hanging by its hinges, and Rhondson had no trouble pushing it open.

She called Hudson's name into the shadows of the citadel. Aside from the echo of her own voice, there was no answer. It probably wasn't safe to go inside, but she had already come so far. Rhondson figured that she may as well make sure that Hudson wasn't here before she left.

The interior of the fortress wasn't nearly as impressive as its silhouette. The entryway was much smaller than she expected, and the floor was made of packed earth. As Rhondson's eyes adjusted to the gloom, she could see that the wooden beams of the ceiling were exposed. They were dark with ash. The smoke had probably come from the tall braziers secured to the pillars set into the stone walls.

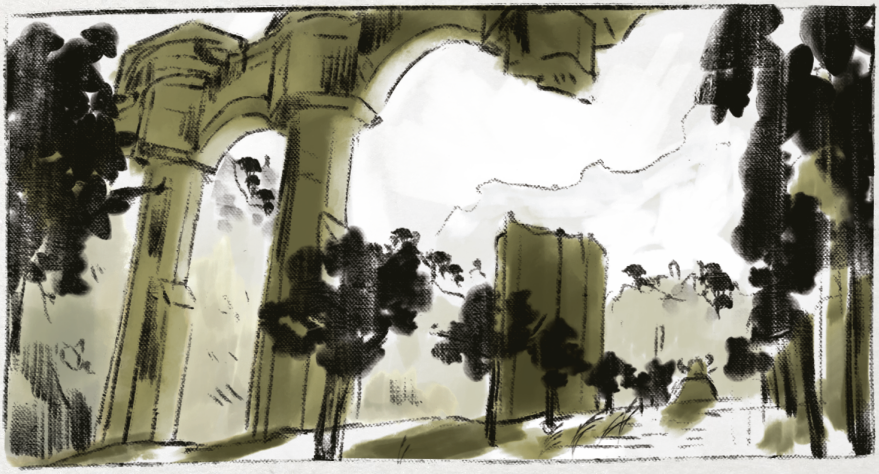
Rhondson walked across the hall, glancing around her with interest. A few piles of old leaves moldered just inside the open service door, but the room was remarkably clean. The tapestries displayed in the bays between pillars still retained some of their color, and wooden weapons racks still clung to the stone walls next to the main gate. Rhondson realized that the earth floor must absorb the humidity of summer and the chill of winter, keeping the wood and cloth relatively preserved. The layer of ash coating the wooden beams of the ceiling probably helped protect them from the elements as well.

Large passageways ringed with shallow arches connected the central hall to the east and west wings, but Rhondson was more interested in a spiral staircase carved into the back wall. Although she had to bend her head to enter, the stairs bore her weight. Each step dipped slightly toward the middle from centuries of use. As she climbed to the next floor, Rhondson was amused by the thought of walking in the footsteps of people who

had lived so long ago.

The room above was much smaller than the citadel's entrance, but its ceiling was almost as high. The walls were constructed of the same unpainted white limestone as the fortress exterior. Their rough surfaces were irregularly broken by small rectangular windows positioned slightly above eye level. Some of the glass panes were missing, allowing a cool breeze to enter the bright and sun-warmed space, but the floorboards were level and seemed solid enough

Rhondson began to make her way from room to room. Her first thought was that the haphazard layout was due to poor planning, but she gradually realized that different parts of the Akkala Citadel must have been built at different times, more than likely after various battles. Very few furnishings remained in the deserted fortress, but the architecture differed so drastically between rooms that it was clear she was walking through different periods of history. Rhondson was amazed by the evolution of the windows, which became larger and more ornate as she walked. She imagined that this was what Hyrule Castle must look like, an amalgamation of architectural styles that had grown and transformed along with the kingdom itself.



Rhondson enjoyed her stroll through the ruins, but Hudson was nowhere to be found. The sun was already low in the sky, so she made her way outside and began her descent. From her vantage point at the top of the path, she could see a flat patch of land at the base of the hill. The soldiers stationed here must have used it as a parade ground for exercise and training. It would be as good a place as any to make camp.

Dusk had begun to gather by the time she arrived on the field, and the shadows lay long across the tall grass. Rhondson didn't see the Hinox immediately, but she could smell it. The odor wasn't unpleasant, but it was unmistakable. As soon as she realized that she wasn't alone, Rhondson turned to leave. Most Hinoxes tended to ignore the travelers that wandered into their vicinity, but she didn't want to take any chances.

Without warning, the Hinox bellowed. Its scream sent startled birds up from the nearby trees in a rush of beating wings and angry squawking. Rhondson prepared herself to make a run for her life, but she was stopped in her tracks by a voice she would recognize anywhere.

"Don't cry, you big baby. It only stings at first. You'll feel better in two shakes of a blupee's tail."

Rhondson shook her head with amusement as she walked across the field toward the source of the voice. The Hinox pouted at her, giant tears spilling from its eye.

"Hudson?"

The broad-shouldered man crouching beside the Hinox jerked his head up. "Rhondson? What are you doing here?"

"I could ask you the same thing. I came looking for you. Is this where you've been this whole time?"

"I meant to come back last night," Hudson replied, averting his eyes. "But this oaf hurt his foot while helping me clear away the rubble on the path up the mountain, and I couldn't just leave him like this. The wound would have suppurated, and he's all alone out here."

Rhondson gave the Hinox a closer look and saw that it – he – had a deep gash on his heel. Hudson was cleaning it with a balled-up wad of fabric. If she wasn't mistaken, it was the first workshirt she'd sewn for him. She'd made it just as they were starting to get to know one another, before she knew his measurements, and it fit him poorly. She asked him to throw it away and bury it with the compost months ago, but he'd apparently kept it. Hudson was surprisingly sentimental for a man who insisted on utility over decoration. It was one of the things she liked about him.

Rhondson smiled as she shrugged her pack onto the ground and dug out a jar of safflina salve. As Hudson helped her dress the Hinox's wound, he explained that he had indeed come here to assess the state of the stonework. He assumed the citadel would be in ruins, but the structure was still sound. It would be a shame to dismantle it. With a few minor renovations, it would be almost as good as new. Still, making it more habitable would mean reducing its efficacy as a fortress.

"But what does that matter?" Rhondson asked. "Who's going to attack it?"

"There are monsters roaming about, and…"

"Does this 'monster' look like he's going to attack anyone?"

The Hinox had fallen asleep as they talked and was snoring lightly.

"He's not a monster," Hudson replied with a frown.

"Exactly. It seems to me that you're already thinking about hiring him to work for you."

"I'm not… Well, I guess I am. Having a Hinox around would be useful, especially if I decide to fix up this place, but we'd have to knock down some of the interior walls to make more room for him."

Rhondson winced as she remembered all the times she'd banged her forehead on Hylian doorways. Now that she thought about it, there was no reason for those doors to be so low in the first place, especially not when her husband could so easily make them more accommodating. "Weren't you planning to knock down the walls anyway?" she pointed out. "You could use the materials to repair the bridge."

"But it's disrespectful not to honor the past," Hudson objected. "Shouldn't the history of the Akkala Citadel be preserved?"

"It's in ruins." Rhondson put a hand on his shoulder. "One day you'll have to come with me to visit my family. Everything in Gerudo Town is built on top of history. Nothing gets done if you worry about preserving the past as it once was. Living things change, and that includes old castles like this."

"Maybe it includes towns too," Hudson replied. "I guess it won't be so bad if Tarrey Town grows. We could have a sister city maybe, right here on this hill. It would be a convenient waystation for travelers." He thought for a moment. "And a good place for Hinoxes, too. It's built on their scale, at least, and they're all over Akkala. It's a shame they always have to sleep in the open. Besides, Mason looks like he could use a friend. He'll be lonely without me."

Mason? Rhondson grinned at the name her husband had assigned to the Hinox. "Are you going to bring him home, then?" she asked.

"Home is wherever you are, Rhondson. We'll go wherever you like. I missed you."

"I missed you too, but we can spend a night or two away from Tarrey Town. I'd like to go back to the citadel tomorrow morning. I don't think anyone has been inside this place for at least a hundred years."

The sun had finally set, and stars were beginning to shine in the deepening indigo of the twilight sky. Rhondson smiled as she pictured the castle on the hill once again filled with lights. There was a certain charm to speculating on what the past might have been like, but the future held much more potential for imagination.

****

HYRULE CASTLE

ALTHOUGH THE KINGDOM OF HYRULE HAS UNDERGONE MANY TRANSFORMATIONS OVER THE LAST MILLENNIA, IT CAN BE SAID THAT THE CASTLE OF THE ROYAL FAMILY HAS ALWAYS BEEN A SPECIAL SYMBOL OF THE KINGDOM. IT IS SAID THAT IT WAS MAGICAL IN NATURE AND THAT ANCIENT POWERS PROTECTED THE CASTLE.

Cause of Destruction

words by Kip

The storm had come too late. Thankfully, it was all devastated.

She continued to run from the screaming.

The Sheikah woman headed for the hills, brittle trees littering the eastern side of the Lindor mountain side. If she hurried, she could meet up with the others who had—

A distant crack of thunder melded with the collapse of stone; she makes the mistake of glancing back.

In the greater horizon, the shadow of Hyrule Castle looms over a conquered dusk. A shrill cry—something between a roar and a whine—escapes from the cloudy malice beast that enshrouds the Hylian monument. But that was just the backdrop, the canvas for contrast. Closer still, in the billowing grass of North Hyrule Plain, the stormy winds cut through fog and smoke like a dagger.

In the opened wound, the faint silhouette of a building glows.

Blue.

Blue.

Blue.

She keeps running.

The color might have at one point been appealing—the symbol of the Royals, the pleasant hue that cloaked a perfect morning. But tonight it just haunted her...chased her...reminded her of the terrible deed that was done.

A horse came over the hills.

"HEY!" a man shouted, mounted on a grey horse. "MA'AM! HALT, PLEASE!"

Crap. She sucked in a breath through her teeth, clutched her limp, burned arm, and kept moving. *I just need to reach the trees.*

But the chase seemed over before it had even started. When she had first started running from the blue, some wandering captain had stopped her to ask what was wrong. There was a strange kindness in his striking eyes, a forgein concept in this land now stricken with grief, death, and paranoia. In her haste—and possibly shame of what she had done—she had just pushed the captain away and fled. *Very inconspicuous…good job me.*

Now it seems he had found her again. Any other day she might have commended him for his kindness in checking with some random Sheikah, during the end of the world no less.

But tonight, well...there's a sliver of her that might have preferred death.

The woman tripped on a divet in the earth, crashing down on one of her badly burned legs, and hissed at the pain. The rain had muddied the path, and was staining her once white clothes a disgusting marron. The pounding of hooves grew closer, until they halted right next to her ears.

A pair of leather boots crashed into the mud.

"Ma'am, don't get up. You're injured. Please."

The clang of metal armour accompanies the voice. Oh he was a captain alright, equipped well for the apocalypse. His metalspear and armour adorned in—

She looks up.

Blue.

A slight frown.

The man tries to help her to her feet, watching to not clutch on the wounds on her right side. "Whatcha doing all the way out here? The nearest settlement is a ways away." The captain lifts up one of her arms, and his eyes widen just a bit. "Dammit...those burns look bad. We might getcha some aid...there's a laboratory place nearby that I'm heading by, just due east and—"

"...Lab?" The woman can't help but wonder aloud. *No...you idiot, you can't be serious.*

The captain smiles again. "See now, that's why I was so eager to catch your attention. You're running in the wrong direction." He points in the direction she was running towards. "Up where you're going is just mountains. There's a fancy smancy lab a bit south that could help patch you up better than—"

"If you head to that lab, you'll die." She lets the words linger for a moment. "Unless, of course, that was the desired plan for the evening." The woman laughs to herself, but the sound is empty and dry.

He frowns. "...What?"

She's silent, gears turning in her head. *Goddess...how do I say this without—*

She points east, the rain pattering on her outstretched sleeve. "Tell me, Captain. What do you see over there?"

The man pauses, his face contort with confusion. He follows her hand and stares at the blue.

"...North Hyrule Plain. Some building glowing blue over there…I'm assuming that's the techno-wizz from the L—"

"*Lab*, yes. That would be the Royal Ancient Lab. Though I'm afraid it's not glowing from 'techno-wizz' or anything of that sort, dear captain."

She crosses her arms, turning to look away from the blue and hugging her knees. "It's currently burning to the ground."

An ugly pause, as the man seems to take a moment to digest this. He flickers his gaze between the Sheikah and the distant blue building.

"I-It's...It's raining though—"

"*Blue* flame, I'm afraid, is a bit more resistant. Plus, it's been burning long before the storm came through."

"What...I…" The captain sits next to her, plopping into the mud in disbelief. "I was really thinking that...why would…"

He turns to her, his eyes are stormy grey, with faint specks of blue, like embers. The captain's tone is gravely serious. "Miss, why was that lab destroyed?"

The question catches her off guard. Her jaw's clenched, but she breaks their staring contest and hides her surprise with a shrug. "Same reason as every other disaster today. Calamity Ganon destroyed it."

There's a crack of thunder, and the ground shudders at her lie.

"...No." the man mumbles.

"Look, I know it's a lot to process—"

"No, I mean," he stands, hand reaching for his back, "that's not what *actually* happened, is it ma'am?"

Crap. The Sheikah holds her hands in the air. "If this is about me shoving you earlier, I was just a bit—"

"Aw now don'tcha worry about that, I took no personal offense." He scratches the blond stubble on his chin.

"Now the thing that I do find some mighty fine offense to, is the fact that there's a good lick of a chance that I'm currently speaking to an arsonist traitor."

There's a BOOM, and in the distance, another large piece of the Royal Lab collapses into the earth. The blue grows brighter.

"Me? What in the name of Hylia are you—"

"Let's not play dumb, ma'am. Trust me, I'm a sucker for some pleasantries and small talk, though I'm afraid addressing the fact that you burned down the nearest safe haven for miles is gonna take priority here."

The Sheikah woman just fumes, attempting to get up in the captain's face. "How DARE you accuse me of—"

She's cut off by the shing of metal cutting through air. The captain twirls the spear on his back and points the end right at her neck, resting just below her chin. She scowls, but puts her hands in the air.

"You just don't understan—"

"That's a mighty fine torch you got there…" He clicks his tongue.

Both hands grip his spear steady, ready to pierce flesh at any moment. The captain gestures with a wink to the torch attached to her waist. It seems to still smolder slightly with faint blue embers.

The captain looks between the torch, and the blue fire in the horizon.

"Yes, a mighty fine torch indeed." He presses the spear tip a bit further forward.

"And it's glowing a familiar color."

****

Cause of Destruction

An Analysis of the Destruction of the Royal Ancient Lab

By Dr. J Kippers
(But please, Kippers was my father, call me Kip)

So heroes are a thing, huh? Who'da thunk it! One minute, I'm continuing my travels, studying some cool rocks and bricks in Hyrule Field. Then the next, a giant malice pig appears and fights some teenage boy wielding a glowing stick. I *definitely* wasn't cowering behind the ruins of a garrison bathroom while that all happened, and I *definitely* was doing some cool badass fighting moves with my...pen, to help that knight and save the world and stuff. Makes for a pretty cool story, yeah? HA, Traysi would kill for it…

But enough of my daring, slightly exaggerated, exploits. It's been a few weeks since the world's settled down from the Calamity's defeat, which means I had prime time to settle back into my hometown, and put my years of travel and research to paper!

I spent the majority of my life studying the history of Hyrule as it fell to the Calamity 100 years ago...and with the world now revitalizing, it's just prime time to get myself out there! Research wise, that is!

At first, I didn't really know what to write, cause WOW there's just so many topics to choose from. Plus there's a lot on the line here, gotta make a good impression for whatever new kingdom that Princess Zelda's got planned. She seems the scholarly type, yeah? I'm thinking I could snag some Hyrule history teach' position at a rebuilt university or something… Princess has got an awful lot of focus on the reconstruction of different village ruins. Which is fair, cause who better to know how to rebuild these places than the people who were alive to see them in their prime!

And you see, that's where my journey of knowledge began! People with first hand knowledge of the events of distant past are alive? OH a historian's dream…my soul swells in happiness. Plus, I also got my researcher brain a-tingling. My dad's friend's cousin's neighbor's grandma's dog's breeder knew Dr. Robbie back in the day, so Sheikah tech is basically in my blood.

With these passions rejuvenated I had my goal! Publish some revolutionary new theory that combined my awesome knowledge for history, archeology, and tech! And what better place to see that than, (duh) the Royal Ancient Lab Ruins.

Now, there doesn't seem to be much in these ruins…it's absolutely barren. No weapons or treasures to be seen. Just your run-of-the-mill ruined ruins, destroyed long ago by the Calamity. And that was the end of the story.

At least that's what I thought until I did a little more digging. See, as I was doing some additional research, I stumbled upon this old history/research book stored in the Kakariko archive. I have no idea where it came from...it's titled...C-Caa...Creation? Creating? Creating a...Cham...it's kinda faded and hard to read. But anyhow, this weird little history book was written by some guy named "Nine-tendons." If someone out there has a copy feel free to hit me up, but for today's sake title and author don't really matter. The point is, one of the quotes in that book describes the ruins like this:

ROYAL ANCIENT LAB RUINS

It is thought that these ruins represent the ancient relic research facility that was under the direct rule of Hyrule Castle, but only the outer walls remain. There is no trace of the building's interior, let alone any research materials.

The thoroughness of its destruction feels intentional. [Page 396, Cr_ating a Champ___, Nint__do.]

Now I'm not too familiar with the work of whoever Mr. Nin-Ten-doves is, but I *strangely* trust their word on the topic wholeheartedly. Call it a feeling from the divine if you must, but they're right! It seems so much more obvious in hindsight.

My adventures into the other various ruins across Hyrule always gave me *something* to work with. The world is just crafted for exploration. Old treasure chests, weird rocks with a tiny talking tree fairy underneath. Hell, even a monster or two was always happy to inhabit even the smallest of ruins I've entered. Yet, there is absolutely nothing of prominence to be seen at the ruins of the Royal Ancient Lab. And I've double, triple, and quintuple-checked!

Why are there no rusted weapons...or treasures...or any records or evidence of *anything*, other than some crude stone walls and a rock? That kind of destruction is just unnecessarily absolute, even for the Calamity.

According to detailed drawings/notes I have in my records of *Historical Works during the Age of Calamity* (HW AOC for short), the Royal Ancient Lab was nearly three stories tall, with a royal blue ceiling, complete with a basement level, and an upper telescope! With even the smallest of structures (like simple ranch and village ruins) still standing today with plenty of artifacts, why is as great a structure as the Royal Lab so desolate?

Intentional, intentional, intentional...that word ran through my head for days, weeks, months even. Why would the Royal Ancient Lab be destroyed intentionally? Did the Calamity see it as that major a threat? No, that wouldn't make sense, the movements of Calamity Ganon that day clearly show his intention to use the Sheikah power against the people of Hyrule. An Ancient Lab would be a major benefit, if anything…

So, surprising as it may be, the current prime suspect for the destruction of this lab would actually be…

****

The Sheikah just glares. "Well...what gave it away?

He shrugged his shoulders with a half smile. "Deductive reasoning, with a hint of some good ol' luck perhaps."

"Listen, I know this looks bad, but you have to understand—"

"Oh I understand quite well alright." The captain gives a wink. "I try to be humble, but Mama always did say I was the smartest cookie she knew."

He rests the end of his spear on her collarbone, the threat clearly still present, but it gives him the freedom to pace and wipe rain for his soaked blonde hair.

"See I know that Calamity Ganon's corrupted every bit of Sheikah tech from here to Lurelin. I know that he's been targeting Hylian settlements. 'Seen it myself when some monsters and Guardians destroyed my regiment and post at Maritta Exchange, just a bit north from here. I know that the only reason the other settlements, like the Rito and Zora, are still standing is because Ganon's focusing all his forces on finding and killing the Hylian Champion and the princess. And finally I know that because of that, there is not a Guardian or monster around for many a mile. I mean, just lookie over there."

The woman turns her head, and sure enough, the plains are barren of all life. No movement of machine or beast or person.

"And now my assumption was—and do pardon me if my monologue is redundant to your traitor ears—that the nearest place of safety would be this royal laboratory of technology. It's Sheikah run, so it wouldn't be immediately targeted. Plus the last thing the Calamity would want is for his personal army of destruction to be...well, *destroyed*. Ifs I was them evil cloud demon thing, I woulda wanted the lab with all my corrupted techno babble soldiers to be kept in peak condition. However…"

The captain turns to the right, staring at the blazing blue building in the distance. "... That does not seem to be the case."

The Sheikah opens her mouth to speak, but he holds up the spear again. "Now I'm thinking, the only reason someone would go about destroying that lab, would perhaps be to kill some people, no?"

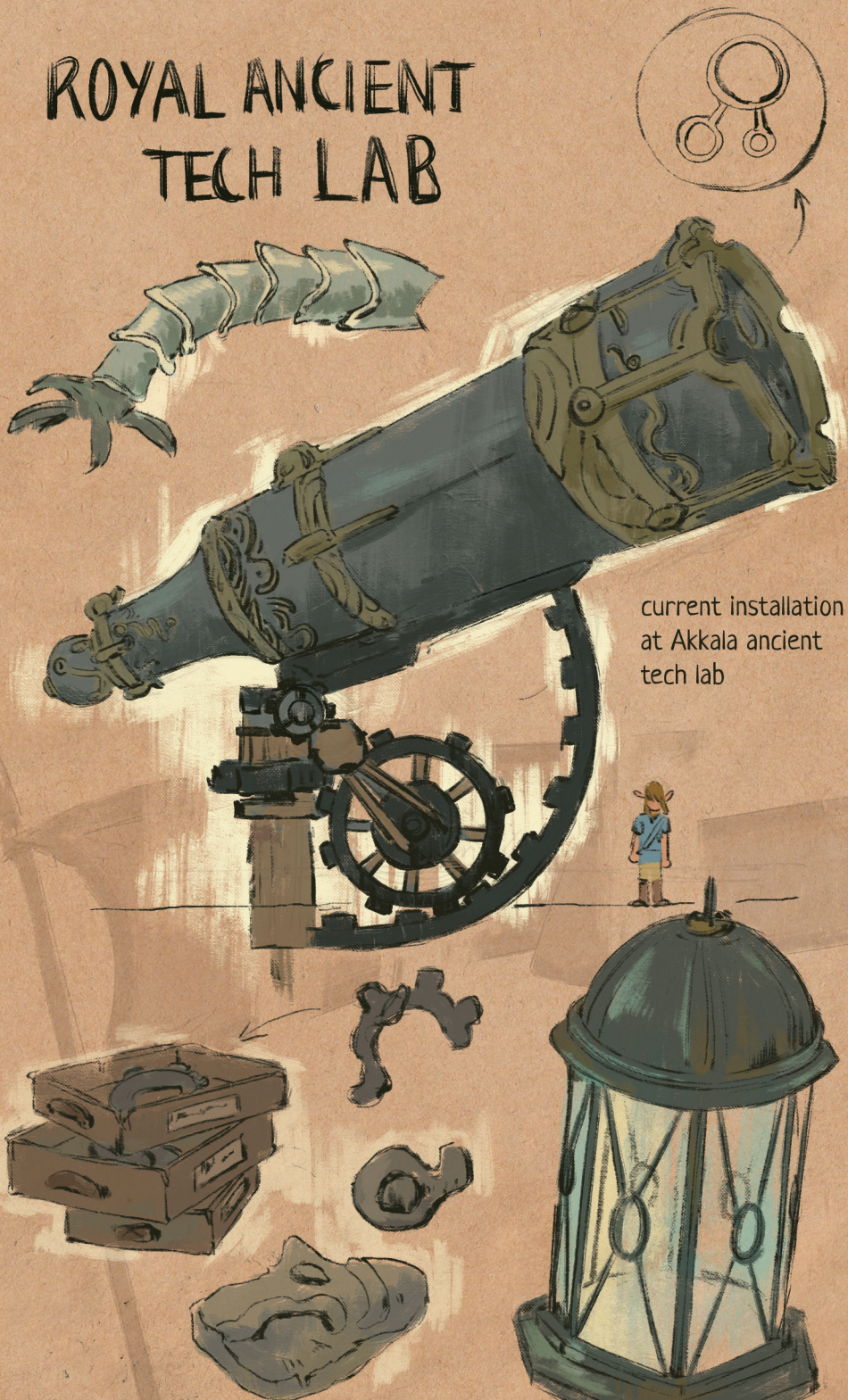
"We didn't—"

"Getting rid of the people who could possibly reverse the Guardian corruption...now I suppose that might be a good evil plan."

"It was for the be—"

"Ma'am I'm all about looking on the bright side of things, but," the captain flicks his head in the direction of the blue, "This ain't exactly the light a' hope I was wanting."

ROYAL ANCIENT TECH LAB



current installation at Akkala ancient tech lab

the dome is said to be
a replica of the Observatory,
located beneath Hyrule Castle
current max
height of the
remains

"Maybe not, but—"

"So,who are ya? Yiga?"

"No, it's—"

"Solo treason then. You getting revenge on someone 'round here? A noble? The King? Or perhaps you're just the sadistic type with the whole—"

"NO!"

The outburst surprises the both of them, and he holds the spear to ner neck firmly. Another crack of thunder reminds them of the silence that's endured. The Sheikah finally sighs.

"Perhaps by definition I am an arsonist and a traitor, but for one thing, I wasn't alone."

The man's eyes shine curiously, but she continues.

"I will gladly die alongside them, as my actions have only been for the benefit of Hyrule."

The rain's tempo quickens as she gets on her feet, but the captain doesn't strike. She stares him down, eyes hidden behind strands of white hair.

"My name is Atsuko, a devoted researcher at the Royal Lab, and you may kill me if you think it just."

****

Ok, now I know what you're all thinking. You're thinking "Kip! Why are you writing this official research paper like some drunken bar rant? How the hell are you gonna get noticed at this rate?" or "Kip! The hell are you thinking?? Sheikah destroying the Ancient Lab makes absolutely no sense?!"

So to that I say, firstly, uhhh you're *welcome* for not being a boring posh, snobby lecturer.(Learned to value a personality over fancy words; lessons my granddad).

As for the latter, you are *quite wrong* my dear friend, quite wrong indeed. It makes an absolute butt-load of sense, and I'm gonna prove it was them, here and now! I mean that's...kinda the whole point of an essay, yeah?

My fellow archeology, history, and tech lovers, not only do I know who is responsible for the Royal Lab's destruction, but I know the true reason why and how! Let us start at the beginning!

What exactly is the lab, and what was its purpose? Well, as the name implies, it was a Sheikah-run laboratory under the hand of

the royal family that researched and experimented with Ancient technology. Again, looking at references in HW AOC, I can place not only Guardian models and Ancient weaponry at the lab, but also the existence of blue flame lamps that seemingly powered the facility.

As we all know, it's tough to mess around with Ancient parts without blue flame, which is the prime energy source for the Ancient Sheikah. Such are the existence of today's Hateno and Akkala tech labs, located near blue flame furnaces. However! This brings into question exactly why the Royal Lab was constructed where it was…

There are only three places in all of Hyrule with natural blue flame deposits, or otherwise called "Ancient Furnaces." That would be in Hateno, Akkala, and within Hyrule Castle itself. So why is the Royal Tech Lab so far from these Ancient Furnaces?

To answer this question, might I direct your attention towards explosions. That's right folks, I'm talking bombs! (Please take this moment to imagine me creating an accompanying explosive sound effect with my mouth)

Some time ago, as I was analyzing the blue flame lamps in Deep Akkala, I ran into that hero of legend face to face! Nice guy, quiet and charming type. Smelled strangely like apples and burnt guts.

Long story short, I traded my entire supply of Hot-Footed Frogs and arrows for a chance to mess with his Sheikah Slate for a bit.

So during that brief period of research, I discovered that while Sheikah tech is usually well controlled—with bomb runes only going off on command by the push of a button—there is an exception! Bomb runes *instantly* react with blue flame, just one touch and they'll instantly explode! Try it out yourself! Er, well. Ok, maybe not. Don't do that, legally I'm not responsible. Plus, it's not like any of you folk out there have access to bomb runes or a Sheikah Slate that you can play around and test it out for yourself like it's some virtual game that you can switch around in your hands.

Bomb runes are giant bundles of compact Sheikah tech. When in contact with a pure blue flame, they go boom. The process with the Sheikah Slate must simplify this process with a remote button, but as I've discovered, the process can be hastened by chucking a torch around.

I call this phenomenon of blue flame reacting destructively with Sheikah technology a "blue combustion!" I'm creative, I know.

I imagine, any experimentation with weapons that harness, compress, or just generally mess with Sheikah tech and lasers, must be conducted in an environment that prevents blue combustion. You don't want pure blue flame touching stuff. Otherwise you go kaboom.

Now I couldn't get a hold of Dr. Robbie or Director Purah myself, something about how they "don't know who the heck" I am, and "you're trespassing please get off it's private property," or something of the sort, I'm not really sure. But even without their testimonies, you'll notice that their large tech labs are constructed a distance away from the actual Ancient Furnace. They aren't right beside it. If they were, you risk losing a limb to a blue combustion. That is also why blue flame lamps exist: to stagger the distance between the flames. And this is why the Royal Lab isn't near an Ancient Furnace.

Yet even so, the distance the Royal Lab has from an Ancient Furnace might still stump you, because even compared to the Akkala and Hateno labs, it is very very far. But here's the kicker, my dear curious readers and poor editor, the reason for this extreme distance is because during its prime, the Royal Ancient Lab housed a large portion of the Guardian army and weaponry. It needed more distance because its contents accumulated a much larger space. I can prove this not only by descriptions shown in HW AOC, but also by notes/drawings shown in the archive called the *Backgrounds of Technological Wonders*, or BOTW for short.

Both these sources show that while Guardians were tested and stationed in Hyrule Castle, the number of Guardians at the castle was probably only in the one hundred mark or less. Now that may seem like a lot, but remember, *hundreds* of Guardians were dug up, as especially shown in the famous Sheikah tapestry of 10,000 years ago. Arguably even thousands, considering that tapestry is a simplification.

So if we can only account for only a portion of the Guardian population at Hyrule Castle, where are the rest? Scattered across different garrisons perhaps, sure. But they'd mainly be in the facility where each of the Guardians were constructed and given power, the place full of the most talented Sheikah researchers, a location that would still be in decent

proximity, but still a safe distance from the castle should an emergency arise: the Royal Ancient Tech Lab. That's where most of the Guardians are.

Now, why is this important? Why did I just spend a few paragraphs talking about blue flames and Guardians and locations when this is about the lab's destruction and demise?

It's because this is my sure fire way to prove to you that the Calamity did not destroy the Royal Lab.

The Royal Ancient Lab was constructed specifically to create the best Guardians and technology to beat the Calamity with.

It would have been constructed specifically to avoid any fatal blue combustion accidents.

And it sure as hell wouldn't have been purposefully destroyed by the Calamity, the one entity who would benefit from its existence.

The lab was decimated by a blue combustion, no question. There isn't anything as powerful as it that could destroy a place so completely. And now knowing the factors surrounding the lab itself, we know that if it was destroyed by a combustion, it was not because of an accident.

It could only have been done purposefully, by the only people who would know the Royal Lab's weaknesses.

It could only have been brought down by the Sheikah researchers.

So now, the questions of exactly how and why remain.

****

The captain just stands and ponders.

"Ma'am, I must confess that I don't find the science of the destruction nearly as interesting as exactly what made you decide to do it."

"It's like I said," Atsuko clutches her burned arm, "It wasn't just me. Really, now, you're too kind to give me so much credit."

The spear end moves closer to her neck. "Alright alright alright, sorry, pal. Look I have no idea if you're even believing all this right now, but you have to trust me that our actions were of the best intentions."

The captain smirks. "Do tell?"

****

According to BOTW, the Ancient Arrow was developed by Dr. Robbie as one of the most powerful means of combating the Calamity itself. In fact, according to research I've found in that CAC book by Mint-en-do, I can place the exact time for the development of this weapon, which I can use to glean information about it's properties.

ANCIENT ARROW

Perhaps forty or fifty years after the day of the Great Calamity Robbie, the lead Guardian researcher, created the first weapon that was effective against the mechanical monsters: the ancient arrow...

Flames come out from the burner like bit [of the Ancient Arrow] and form a blade. [Page 388 and 178, Cr_ating a Champ___, Nint__do.]

The arrow instantly vaporizes whatever it comes into contact with, tearing apart the subject by the molecule, and sending them to non-existence. The description of the weapon implies that it is the pure energy of a blue flame, and built quite differently than other Sheikah weapons.

And the difference definitely shows. I've handled a few of these puppies myself, and let me tell you, they get the job done. While an Ancient sword or axe will certainly do some damage, a single Ancient Arrow can take out a Guardian, or even a Lynel in one hit. I heard that they could even do major damage to Dark Beast Ganon itself!

Now, why do I bring this up? Because this Ancient Arrow proves that the Sheikah 100 years ago knew about the dangers of blue combustion.

An Ancient Arrow is clearly the result of intensive research into blue combustion, it is literally a pure blue flame on a stick pumped up with some Ancient Tech. It vaporizes whatever matter it touches and it ceases to exist.

Hmm...would be a fine explanation as to why the nearly three stories worth of stone and ceiling in the Royal Lab no longer can be found.

And why wasn't the Ancient Arrow developed sooner? It's because no one thought to purposefully cause an event that would destroy everything until they were forced to on the actual day of the Calamity. It's because it took even the most brilliant of scientists half a century to even contain a feat of destruction into a single arrowtip? Yes...when you lay out the facts like that, it seems to make sense on the timeline.

Ah, but I'm getting ahead of myself. Back to the question of "why?" Let me rewind to an earlier point. Where are the thousands of Guardians in Hyrule?

Yes, a good hundred or so could be found in Hyrule Castle, and the majority were in the Royal Ancient Lab. But *today*, where are they? Records in BOTW cite only 157 Guardian remains in all of Hyrule. 157. How? That's impossible. Witnesses and notes in HW AOC prove that much, much more existed. And what's more is that we know that the majority of those Guardians were at the Royal Lab, but there are no Guardians, active or otherwise, to be found there. There is nothing.

It's almost as if all those Guardians were vaporized, they ceased to exist one day.

And you know what.

They did.

(Please take this time to imagine me winking)

There's some theme or metaphor here about the Royal Ancient Lab, constructed in the blues of the Royal family, ironically being destroyed by the blue combustion—but what do I look like, a writer? Find your own secret to life, here's the blunt of it.

The Sheikah knew about the dangers a blue combustion could do, but on the day of the Calamity, they used that knowledge

for the better. Seeing the corrupted Guardians in the distant castle, it is my belief that the researchers there purposefully brought the blue flames—that they had so carefully separated outside in the lanterns—in contact with Ancient Technology. Things not only went kaboom, but the actual matter ceased to exist. A giant Ancient Arrow.

Thousands of Guardians, hundreds of blades and weapons, and honestly, probably even lives, were gone in an instant. The only remains of the carnage would be the aftermath of blue flames that spread across the remains of the outer walls.

The Sheikah did this because it would save the most lives. That's hundreds and thousands of Guardians and machines that wouldn't fall into Ganon's clutches, hundreds of souls saved. Did you know that today Hyrule Ridge, the home of the Royal Lab, has *zero* Guardians? Did you know that the lands near it, Hebra and Tabantha, have the lowest Guardian sightings in all of Hyrule? Even less than the Gerudo Desert. And I cite this all based on my hours of research and facts laid out by BOTW, HW AOC, and the divine work by Mr. Nin-ten-do

But even beyond that, how do I know, in absolute 600% certainty that the Sheikah were in complete control of this destruction? How am I so sure that the Sheikah that day had fully planned the intentional obliviation of their lab?

It's because...I lied earlier.

There is actually *one* relic that survived. One little monument of the Royal Ancient Lab Ruins. One object giving physical proof of this theory.

One artifact that would have been impossible to preserve if the Sheikah hadn't planned it all. I mentioned it briefly before, if you paid attention. Yes! This object is present in both the Royal Lab, and a tech lab of today. You could see it for yourself, if you pay a visit to my dad's friend's cousin's neighbor's grandma's dog's breeder's Sheikah researcher pal...

****

"Dr. Robbie's telescope." Atsuko pointed to the scattered trees in upper Lindor, "Some other scientists took it up there to preserve it. It's the only reason we were able to see the initial Guardian corrupting in the distant castle, and how we were able to adapt to the situation and act so quickly."

The captain glanced at the western mountain. “So you were running up there to meet with them?”

“The wilderness is pretty safe at the moment. And we’re hoping eventually we could take the telescope to another lab where we could possibly continue research. I mean just today from the combustion, Dr. Robbie had this idea for some fancy Sheikah dagger to kill Guardians.”

Silence.

“OK listen, that’s...that’s all I’ve got. You can head up there and confirm the story, or just kill me now, take your pick. Waiting for judgement here.”

More silence. The rain falls harder.

“...I’m—”

“You can call me Cian.” The captain does a little bow. “Captain Cian Kippers, at your leisure.”

Atsuko raises an eyebrow. “Like the color—?”

“Sp-Spelled differently! There’s an “i” in there, and perhaps it’s ironic to the situation, but I figured if we’re gonna be traveling up there together you should have the courtesy of knowing my name.”

She just sputters for a moment. “So...you—”

“I trust your heart—I like to think I’m good with character—and I believe you’re a good person doing your best in the world. As unfortunate as circumstances may have been.” He twirls his spear before fitting it on his back. Cian extends a hand to her which she takes. “People like that are getting rarer by the hour, so I don’t think I should be adding to the death count.”

“So…” she gets on her feet, cocking her head, “You...you believe me then?”

He chuckles. “Well, I didn’t kill you did I?”

Atsuko laughs quietly. “Your mistake…”

“...No.” Cian places a reassuring hand on her shoulder and smiles, as if to say that somehow everything was gonna be alright.

“My intention.”

****

Contributors

Aliana | zine artist - p.23; p.70

Aliana is an illustrator who loves color, cartoons, and making cake. All she does is look at colors and make pretty pictures. Their cat owns them. Follow them on Twitter @alianawong, Tumblr @whistlecat and alianawong.com

Alina Wahab | merch artist

Alina is a queer illustrator and comic artist from India. Their work is inpired by vintage pin ups, old school anime, and high fashion. When not drawing or working on zines, they enjoy watching long winded video essays and researching Russian prison tattoos. Follow them on Tumblr and Instagram @obscureoccultist

Bella | zine artist - p.10; p.16; p.21

Bella is an illustrator, also studying graphic design. They enjoys making Link suffer through blistering heat in the Snowquill set because 'it's what looks coolest'. Follow them on Twitter @BellaLugoArt

Dav | zine artist - p.13; p.80

Dav is an artist who works very hard & thinks very hard about everything, including this bio. Follow them on Twitter @nukdav and Instagram @nukedav

Evelyn Jade | zine artist - p.54; p.92

Night queen **Evelyn Jade** is a character designer and background artist. Loves Gerudos and hauting evil castles. Follow her on Twitter, Instagram @evelynjade_art and Tumblr @evelyn-jade

Fen | writer - p.75

Fen is a writer enamored with the quirky behavior of bokoblins, adventuring with Wolf Link, and playing amateur Zonai theorist. It's the little background details that make them happiest; the kitchens in Hateno houses, one-liners from child characters, and hearty radishes growing in exactly the right places. Follow them on Twitter and Tumblr @laufskadus and Ao3 @Milo

Guppy | writer - p.22

Guppy is a fanfiction author with a penchant for introspection and lots of deep, angst-filled concepts. Follow her on Tumblr @unapologetically-asexual and on Ao3 @self_indulgent_autorship

Hedge | zine artist - p.82; p.89

Hedge is a confused duck that fell down a drain and can't get out. Help. Follow them on Twitter @st_hedge, Tumblr @st-hedge and Instagram @st.hedge

Jenn | zine artist - p.36

A wild creature bound to libraries, immersed in books, trying to establish communication with the silverfish, considered by some true protective spirits of papers capable of revealing great lost knowledge. Ink enthusiast and chosen Hermit of the woods. Follow them on Instagram @jenn.vento and Facebook @jennifer.ventura.1656

Ji | merch artist

Ji is an illustrator who loves to draw things that are colorful and happy. They also love to day dream and take naps with their pet cats. Follow them on Twitter, Tumblr and Instagram @mirarasol

Kathryn | writer - p.83

Kathryn is a writer and researcher with a fondness for fancy elves and mysterious ruins. They always cry at the end of Zelda games. Follow them on Twitter and Instagram @kathrynthehuman, Tumblr @pocketseizure and Ao3 @Rynling

Kip | writer - p.93

Kip is a writer and blogger, spending her days playing video games and analyzing the world of Breath of the Wild for a longer period of time than she'd care to admit... A history nerd and a Gamer™ at heart, she loves RPGs, fanfics, and birds (can you tell what her favourite Botw race is?) while occasionally pushing the limits of games with a few glitches and tricks, if only to see the new ways to perfectly obliterate the nearest Lynel. Follow them on Tumblr @botwstoriesandsuch and @sarcasticmudkip, on Twitter @BOTWandsuch and Ao3 @SarcasticMudkip

Lisa | artist - p.52

Lisa is an art student who likes cute things, fun ideas, and lighting videogame chickens on fire! One of these things is not like the others. Follow her on Twitter and Instagram @parjums

Loki | merch artist

Loki is an artist and graphic designer who spent too much time exploring BotW's map instead of beating the game. Follow her on Instagram @loki.roki, Twitter and Tumblr @lokiroki

Lucky | zine artist - p.40

Lucky is an aspiring Concept Artist for video game design and has a keen eye for detail and eye-popping colors. Her passion (and 900+ hours of gameplay) for Breath of the Wild drew her into this inspiring project! Follow them on Tumblr and Instagram @thankyourluckystars13, and Twitter @luckyart_1300

Mare | zine artist - p.91

Mare's not great at backgrounds but enjoys the pain that comes with painting them! Being a bio and history enthusiast, ruins and abandoned places are free sources of happiness for them. Follow them on Twitter and Instagram @la_mare69

Maria Helena | writer - p.42

Maria Helena is a mixed race prose writer, poet, and visual artist. Her creative pieces range from the beautifully eerie, to the fantastically horrifying. She likes to world-build for fun and is a big fan of haunted houses. Follow her on Twitter, Tumblr and Instagram @shylovrs, and Ao3 @tenderthings

Morniæ | zine artist - p.59; p.64

Morniæ is a freelance illustrator and comic artist. Their work's main focus is put on the depiction of science-fantasy universes and their inhabitants (mostly elves). With a special interest for mystery, decaying worlds and technologically advanced ruins. Follow them on Instagram, Twitter, Tumblr and Artstation @morniae

Natalie Claire | writer - p.17

Natalie Claire is a writer of poetry and prose, trying to make sense of the world one metaphor at a time. She likes making art, baking bread, and overanalyzing the subtext of every film she watches. Follow her on Twitter @synonat and Tumblr @nativerse

Ophelia | writer - p.8

Ophelia is a writer and a lifelong Zelda fan, her favorite game is Minish Cap! Follow her on Tumblr @gaybellatrix and Ao3 @Ophelia_Black

pocketwei | zine artist - p.85-87; p.102

pocketwei is a background and concept artist, a bit too interested in ruins and other decaying, sinister things. Hunting Lynels and bullying guardians is her part-time job. Follow her on Twitter, Tumblr @pocketwei and Instagram @pocketwei_

Ren | merch and zine artist - p.96

Ren is a layout and background artist from the Canadian prairies. His first Zelda games were Oracle of Ages and Oracle of Seasons, which he and his younger brother would trade off when a boss or puzzle was too hard. Follow him on Twitter and Instagram @cursivepractice

Sandflake | zine artist - p.14

Sandflake is a lost possum who grabbed a tablet pen in their teeth and somehow scrabbled into this zine. We don't know how they got here but they promised to make up for it, they'd draw us something. Follow them on Twitter @slightboob and Tumblr @sandflakedraws

Seiraheron | zine artist - p.108

Seiraheron is an illustrator, history lover (with undying phase on cold weapon). Big fan of Breath of the Wild, especially zora and tabantha regions. Follow her on Twitter @Kurdupel113, Tumblr and Instagram @seiraheron

Shannon | zine artist - p.74

Shannon (lilmoonart) is an archaeology student and hobbyist artist who plays way too many video games :^). Follow her on Instagram @lilmoonart

Tzi | merch and zine artist - p.46

Tzi is a graphic designer and concept artist, who specialises in having a vast inventory with .5 weapons at all times. Follow them on Twitter and Instagram @tzitzki

WillfulAbyss | writer - p.56

WillfulAbyss is a fan of lore, the post-apocalypse, and the uncanniness of manmade structures reclaimed by nature. Follow her on Tumblr @willfulabyss

Yooci | zine artist - p.28

Yooci is an illustrator and aspiring storyteller. She has a passion for drawing silly expressions and frogs in her sketchbook. Follow her on Instagram @puzmakk, Twitter @fancyfrogPNG and Tumblr @yooci19, or visit yooci.carrd.co

And Until Next Time, Heroes

Farewell

Memorabilia